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The nightmare of VX gas
News in Focus

Independence Day stars sparkle
Time Out

Russian immigrant women want respect
The Magazine

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Cellcom to fund health study of cell phones

By JUDY SIEGEL

Cellcom has acceded to *The Jerusalem Post's* proposal that the telecommunications company establish a joint research fund with Pelephone and cellular phone importers that would study the possible detrimental effects of mobile phones on health.

If carried out, it reportedly would be the first research project in Israel financed by non-medical companies on the effects of their products on health.

Senior Cellcom executives, who last night convened for an international board meeting, left the session specially to discuss the issue, which was raised by *The Post* in an

article last Friday. *The Post* reported on what experts have described as the "first serious study" to link a significantly increased risk of cancer in mice to exposure to the electromagnetic radiation of cell phones.

The lab study, conducted at Royal Adelaide Hospital in Australia, found that mice exposed to cell phone radiation over a period of 18 months had more than twice the incidence of lymphoma (cancer of the lymphatic system) than those that had not been exposed. Until now, numerous foreign studies failed to prove such a link.

Israel is regarded as a natural place for such research, not only because of the very high level of its scientific achievement, but

Action taken after 'Post' report

also because Israelis spend more minutes on cellular phones per month than people in any other country.

Prof. John Goldsmith, a senior epidemiologist at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev who specializes in radiation, said the Australian study was "very startling new evidence that must be carefully evaluated."

Cellcom spokesman Ilan Bachar last night issued the statement by management, after being informed that Health Minister Yehoshua Matza had agreed to ask Pelephone and Cellcom to finance such

local research, and that Communications Minister Limor Livnat "heartily endorsed" the establishment of such a joint fund. Livnat has ministerial responsibility for the cellular phone companies.

"Cellcom accepts the proposal for research into the subject, and will in the coming days contact Pelephone, as well as the two importers that supply Cellcom with its peripheral equipment, Nokia and Ericsson, so they too can participate. Cellcom would like a joint team to prepare an agreement on the scope of the scientific

research and the financing," Bachar announced.

The Cellcom spokesman added that all the cellular phones imported by Cellcom for use in Israel have "met the highest safety standards of Europe and the US, and numerous scientific studies conducted there have shown that their use is completely safe."

A few months ago, in an analysis of studies conducted up to now, the US Food and Drug Administration stated it had "no proof" that cellular phones harm health.

The Australian study, conducted on 200 mice, was led by Dr. Michael Repacholi, and published in *Radiation Research*, volume 147. The Australian authors claim their arti-

cle was turned down by the prestigious journal *Science* on the grounds that publication would cause panic, and by *Nature* because "it could not handle such important conclusions without the research being confirmed by further studies."

Dr. Avi Livnat, head of the ministry's medical device unit, stated that "the subject is important," especially since many children also use cellular phones, thus making long-term exposure a factor.

Pelephone spokeswoman Ayelet Gradman said: "We have not been contacted by either the minister or anyone else about such an initiative; if we are, we will study the matter and comment on it."



Moledet MK Benny Elon points yesterday to the eastern Jerusalem house recently acquired for use by his Beit Orot Yeshiva. (Reuters)

Beit Orot yeshiva gets villa in eastern Jerusalem as a gift

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

A villa in an Arab neighborhood of eastern Jerusalem has been bought by an American millionaire and given to the Beit Orot Yeshiva, it was revealed yesterday, only days after the Palestinian Authority warned that anyone selling land to Jews would be sentenced to death.

The villa, situated on a four-dunam plot between Mt. Scopus and the Mount of Olives in the Arab neighborhood of A-Tur, was reportedly sold for NIS 10 million by its owner Armenian Archbishop Shahe Ajamian to Irving Moskowitz, who handed it over to the yeshiva.

Ajamian has reportedly left the country.

Moskowitz is said to have financed archeological excavations near the Western Wall and purchased land in the Arab neighborhood of Ras el-Amud in Jerusalem.

Yesterday morning, yeshiva students started refurbishing the villa,

Settlers' council assists Yitzhar residents, Page 3

which they are to move into on Independence Day. Steps were constructed connecting the building to Beit Orot.

Arabs, who noticed the work being carried out, reported it to the Palestinian Authority. Ahmed Tibi, an adviser to PA Chairman Yasser Arafat, called the incident extremely serious.

MK Benny Elon (Moledet), director of Beit Orot, said he couldn't understand what all the fuss was about.

"We are on good terms with all our neighbors," he said.

Regarding Tibi's remarks, Elon said, "So what if the Palestinians are angry?"

Beit Orot, a hedder-dunam plot, was

Villa's Armenian seller has colorful past

Members of Jerusalem's Armenian community yesterday speculated that Archbishop Shahe Ajamian, one of their most colorful and controversial clerics, must have closed the deal to sell his home on the Mount of Olives to the Beit Orot Yeshiva in January, when he spent two weeks in Jerusalem.

Considered by many to be the most brilliant member of the Armenian religious brotherhood and for many years chancellor of the Armenian Patriarchate, Ajamian fell from grace in 1982 as a result of a rift with the then-patriarch, the late Yeshighe Derdenian. A friend of such figures as former Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kolek and former Interior Ministry Jerusalem district representative Rafi Levy, the Armenian churchman suffered a further reversal of fortune when he was jailed for three weeks in connection with Levy's incarceration on corruption charges.

However, despite these setbacks, Ajamian not only enjoyed the backing of the world head of his church in Armenia, he also had considerable personal wealth, the result of real estate deals and the sale of parts of his extensive Russian place, Byzantine ceramics and oriental carpet collections.

For the past few years Ajamian, 75, has been living in the Armenian Republic, where he teaches religion. People in the community said that now that he has sold his house, it is doubtful that he will return to Jerusalem, especially in view of the intense anger that the sale engendered in Palestinian circles.

Haim Shapiro

established in 1990. It was the subject of great controversy four years ago when it attempted to expand by erecting temporary homes that adjoined the yeshiva. At the time, the Jerusalem Municipality issued a demolition order which enraged settlement leaders.

The order was later revoked by Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert.

'No progress' in Ross talks

Ayalon to meet PA security heads

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN and JON IMMANUEL

US peace envoy Dennis Ross appeared to make little progress in his efforts to renew the peace process yesterday, but the heads of the General Security Service and the Palestinians' security services are expected to resume contact today.

A meeting that had been scheduled for yesterday between GSS head Ami Ayalon and Palestinian security services heads Mohammed Dahlan and Jibril Rajoub was postponed to today.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said yesterday that the meeting of the security heads will be a test as to whether there will be full cooperation between the two sides.

Last night Gaza Preventive Security chief Dahlan met with Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat. The Palestinians said that a third party, the US, would be present at any security meetings with Israel.

Ross spent yesterday morning meeting Netanyahu, President Ezer Weizman and Foreign Minister David Levy. Weizman recounted his impressions of his meeting with Arafat the previous



Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu sits down for a meeting with US peace process envoy Dennis Ross (center) and Foreign Minister David Levy in Jerusalem yesterday. (Reuters)

day, noting that he had promised large-scale building for Arabs in Jerusalem, but did not have the authority to agree to the Palestinians' demands.

Theo Ross met Netanyahu, who spoke mainly of Israel's security demands. He told Ross that Israel is not getting real-time intelligence about Palestinian terrorist activity and that the PA has not proved its determination to fight terrorism.

Ross then met with Arafat and passed on Israel's message that the building in Har Homa and the settlements will not stop. The PA chairman reiterated that there must be a halt to settlements before peace talks can resume.

The meeting was described by diplomatic sources as "unsuccessful."

"We're looking at all matters to see what can be done, to find ways to restore confidence, which is really crucial if we're going to be able to [put] the peace process back on track," Ross said, after the meeting.

Arafat spokesman Marwan Kanafani clarified that "settlements about Palestinian terrorist activity" included the Har Homa project.

"All settlements including Jebel Abu Gneim [Har Homa], must stop. Dennis Ross should understand that nothing will move if settlements do not stop," Kanafani said.

The Palestinians made clear that they are not willing to accept the Har Homa project in return for some other concession.

Continued on Page 6

Most Israelis fly the flag

A large majority of Israelis hang the national flag from their homes or cars on Independence Day, according to a Gallup survey conducted by Army Radio.

The telephone survey of 503 adults above the age of 18 representing all sectors of the population (including the Arab sector) had a 4.4% margin of error.

Since Independence Day 1996, the population has grown 2.6 percent, to 5.8 million. Some 68,000 of the state's 148,000 new residents are new immigrants.

Bnei Akiva members plan to distribute 20,000 memorial can-

dles at military cemeteries around the country for Remembrance Day for the Fallen of Israel's Wars, which begins Saturday night.

A one-minute siren is to sound at 10 p.m. on Saturday, followed by municipal memorial ceremonies.

On Sunday, there will be memorial ceremonies at military cemeteries after a two-minute siren goes off at 11 a.m. Egged, Magen David Adom and security forces have made special arrangements to accommodate the crowds expected at the ceremonies.

Independence Day celebrations begin Sunday night.

Jerusalem Post Staff and Itim

Remembrance Day to mark death of 18,538, Page 18

Seventy-two percent display the flag outside their homes, while 62% put flags on their cars.

Of those who hang flags from their homes, there was no significant difference in the percentage between those who supported Binyamin Netanyahu and those who supported Shimon Peres in the last elections. However, a clear majority of car-flags

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Bereshba 7:02 p.m.	8:00 p.m.
Eilat 7:00 p.m.	8:02 p.m.

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NEWS

in brief

Government workers stopping sanctions

The workers at 15 government ministries announced last night that they are stopping their work sanctions, after having seriously disrupted their offices' operations for seven workdays.

Shots fired at car near Neveh Daniel

Shots were fired last night at a van near the settlement Neveh Daniel, south of the Tunnel Road that joins Gush Etzion to Jerusalem, according to the settlers' news agency.

Peled Committee recommends TV reform

The Peled Committee considering changes in the structure of television broadcasting, has recommended establishing one communications authority and rewriting the country's communications laws.

IDF ransacks illegal Beduin encampment

Forces from the IDF and civil administration removed a number of Beduin families living on what the army said was state land near Jericho. Witnesses were quoted as saying the IDF soldiers beat the Beduin, but the army denied this.

Army reissues touring regulations for areas

The IDF yesterday repeated its call for those planning to tour in Judea, Samaria and the Jordan Valley to first coordinate their travels with the proper security authorities.

OC Northern Command awards 7 medals

OC Northern Command Maj.-Gen. Amiram Levine has presented medals to seven officers and soldiers. One of the awards was made posthumously.

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Reno confirms spy scandal probe

WASHINGTON - Attorney General Janet Reno confirmed yesterday that there is an investigation involving an intercepted conversation that suggested Israel may have an intelligence source who can obtain sensitive US information.

obtain a sensitive American document, a letter from then-secretary of state Warren Christopher to Palestinian Chairman Yasser Arafat, the Post reported.

Peres-for-party-president proposal suffers severe blow

The proposal to appoint Shimon Peres as Labor Party president suffered what may be an irreversible setback last night when the party steering committee refused to put it on the agenda of next week's convention.



Shimon Peres (Isaac Harari)

Deri to A-G: Suspend my fraud trial

Shas MK Aryeh Deri yesterday asked Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein to suspend his current fraud trial and resume it only after he is tried on the allegations relating to the Bar-On Affair.



Aryeh Deri (Isaac Harari)

CORRECTION

Opening Exhibition - Bobbie Hartman Paintings
Nora Gallery
May 17th, 1997
Time: after Shabbat 20:30 - 22:30

Bar-Ilan University
Faculty of Jewish Studies
Department of Land of Israel Studies

The Ingeborg Rennert Center for Jerusalem Studies
invites the public to a symposium in Hebrew on
"The Responsibility of the Jewish People vis-a-vis World Moral Issues"
Wednesday, May 14, 1997, at 11:00 a.m.,
in the Beck Auditorium

Keynote participant: Prof. Elie Wiesel, Nobel Laureate

Other participants: Prof. Irwin Cotler, Chaim Guri, Rabbi Menachem Maccohen, Prof. Ella Beifer, Prof. Daniel Statman and Prof. Yehudit Dishon (moderator)

Settlers angry over portrayal in Rabin film

Settlement leaders are seeking to prevent the screening of the documentary 'The Road to Kikar Rabin', slated to be broadcast on Channel 2 on Ilana Dayan's 'Facts' show next Tuesday night.

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Winning numbers and cards

In the weekly Payis Hazak draw, ticket 277733 won the NIS 1 million prize and ticket 506377 won a car. Winning NIS 5,000 were tickets 060760, 056810, 807830, 081461, 570728, 827844, 518347 and 290295. Tickets ending in 62653, 60265, 77792, 26668, 73411, 66022, 90642, 59103, 25087, 05968, 83107, 75583, 47683, 45354, 85004, 40812, 42857, 00011 and 73153 won NIS 1,000.

Tickets ending in 870, 639, 466 and 421 won NIS 100. Winning NIS 50 were tickets ending in 53, 30, 40 and 58. Tickets ending in 20 and 62 won NIS 20, while those ending in 9 and 2 won NIS 10.

In yesterday's Mifal Hapayis daily Chance draws, the lucky cards were the queen of spades, seven of hearts, 10 of diamonds and ace of clubs; and 10 of spades, ace of hearts, seven of diamonds and eight of clubs.

party... critics of the Government are on trial for subver...

כלא מן האשכול

COMMENT

Yitzhar - Netanyahu's lose-lose gambit

By HERB KEINON

Just days after three illegally built structures were demolished outside of Yitzhar and dozens of people evicted from the site, the residents continued to rebuild the structures - under the watchful eye of the police and IDF.

That the security forces, who tore down the structures on Tuesday, were watching them go back up on Wednesday and Thursday, forces the basic question: What is going on? Why go through the trouble of bloodying noses, destroying buildings and providing the people of Israel with traumatic pictures of Jews evicting Jews, only then to turn around the next day and let other structures go up at the same site?

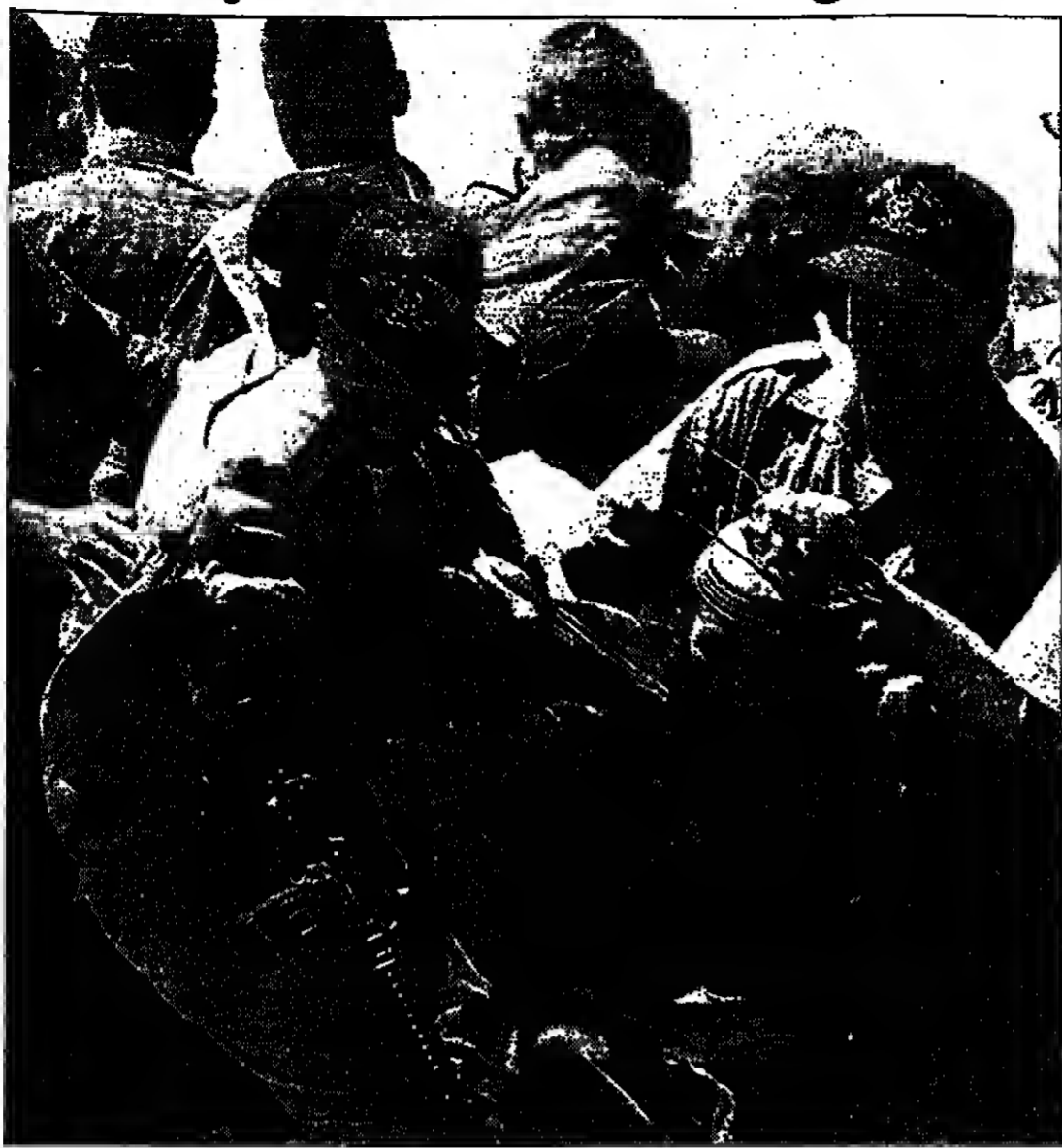
The seemingly obvious explanation for the order to demolish the structures is that it was an attempt to show a visiting Dennis Ross that Israel is intent on keeping the settlers in line, and that despite the government's lukewarm attitude toward the Oslo process, it is intent on keeping the settlers from staking a claim to more and more hill-tops.

This explanation is just an extension of a similar theory: that the Yitzhar incident was timed to coincide with the Weizman-Arafat meeting at Erez earlier this week. According to this reasoning, the structures were destroyed as a type of "confidence building" measure toward the Palestinians.

The concern among settlement officials is that destruction of the structures heralds a new government policy of removing similar structures at other settlements created under the previous government. These structures, which settlement officials say number in the "dozens," were erected with the wink of an eye but without formal government approval in order to keep the Palestinians from encroaching on state land.

Had the demolition at Yitzhar heralded a new government policy to begin removing these structures, then it would have made no sense for the security forces to turn a blind eye a couple of days later as they were being rebuilt. Does anybody really think that Ross, the US special envoy, or Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat are that stupid?

Another explanation for the whole episode is that the removal of these homes, coupled with the removal of two mobile homes set up illegally in Mitzpeh Yericho five days earlier, was designed to show the highly ideological settlers who populate both settlements that the



Policemen struggle with a Yitzhar resident on Tuesday, when illegally built structures there were demolished. (AP)

government is intent on setting firm boundaries to their communities, and that it is not going to let the decision on where and when to build be made by the settlers themselves, as happened during the Begin years.

The problem with this explanation is that the structures at Yitzhar have been there for at least two years, and are not - as could be argued at Mitzpeh Yericho - an attempt to lay claim to new land.

Another reason bandied about for the Yitzhar operation, at least in settlement circles, is that OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan simply wanted to "get back" at the settlement. This is not the first time that the IDF and police have gone into Yitzhar,

either to look for alleged trouble-makers or to stop illegal building. The last time was April 1996, when six mobile homes were removed.

According to this reasoning, Dayan gave the order to remove the structures as a way to settle accounts with the settlement - a far-fetched idea that a commander of Dayan's stature would embark on this type of personal vendetta.

Which leaves one other explanation - the *shleimeliot* (dolt) factor. According to this theory, the whole Yitzhar operation was - like the Roni Bar-On appointment - simply another example of a government policy that is taken without considering all the ramifications.

For months, settlement leaders

have complained that when it comes to settlement policy, Netanyahu is ensuring the worst of all worlds. On the one hand, he makes grandiose proclamations about the rights of the Jews to Eretz Yisrael, and says he will build in the territories, thereby attracting fire from the entire world. Yet, on the ground, he does little.

In the Yitzhar case, to use the same analogy, he goes ahead and destroys the structures, bringing about the wrath of the settlers and the right-wing of his coalition, and in the end watches as the structures are rebuilt, thereby enraging the Palestinians and the left. Nothing is gained, and he is criticized on all sides.

Yitzhar residents rebuild six homes

Yesha: We will not tolerate further destruction

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

Yitzhar settlers worked ferociously throughout the day yesterday to build houses on a nearby hilltop, where three homes were destroyed under military order two days earlier.

By nightfall the settlement's secretary Yehuda Liebman said six houses had been erected and families were moving in.

Earlier in the day, IDF troops visited the hilltop and reported details of the work being carried out to their superiors.

The Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza sent supplies to Yitzhar on Wednesday night and yesterday morning to help the settlers rebuild.

"We will not tolerate further destruction of Jewish homes," said council spokeswoman Yehudit Tayar.

Later, the council met with Yitzhar settlers to determine what strategy should be taken in their struggle to remain on the hilltop.

After the meeting, Liebman said they expected around 300 settlers and others who support their effort to spend Shabbat on the hilltop. In addition, he said they are planning to celebrate Independence Day at the site and expect a large show of people, including members of the Laod of Israel Front Knesset caucus and other public figures.

"We will continue to build wooden houses on the hilltop, and fill them with families from the settlement," he said.

Meanwhile, council members sought to arrange an emergency meeting with Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai to discuss the situation in Yitzhar and clarify what policies and plans the ministry has for the future regarding the settlements.

In addition, Tayar said it was also an opportunity to improve relations. Mordechai's media coordinator

Avi Beoyahu said the minister would meet with the settlement council leaders next week.

Regarding the rebuilding on the hilltop in Yitzhar and whether the ministry planned to demolish the houses, Beoyahu said he would not divulge any future plans or steps the ministry may take.

"We expect the present government we all worked so hard to have elected will realize that there is no compromise on the matter," said Tayar.

As council leaders met in Yitzhar, a force of 60 to 70 policemen arrived at Mitzpeh Yericho and began taking photos and walking around the settlement. Their arrival caused concern, as residents feared they planned to remove more caravans.

A week ago, a force of 180 policemen carried out a surprise raid and removed two caravans situated on a hilltop in the 180-family settlement.

When confronted by settlers, some of the policemen told them - "It's a scheme we can't evacuate you as well," according to resident Eli Neiman.

The settlers demanded that the police leave immediately, and accompanied them out of the settlement.

Mitzpeh Yericho secretary Sarah Sarel said the policemen took photos of some 20 caravans set up in the new neighborhood that houses young married couples.

Judea and Samaria police spokesman Opher Sivan refused to comment or explain why the police were there.

"We don't have to give details of everything we do," he said.

Meanwhile, Meretz leader Yossi Sarid demanded that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai forbid any illegal building on the hilltop in Yitzhar.

"If the government is unable to prevent these lawbreakers, then they are in effect partners in crime," he said.



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Section for Memorializing the Fallen

Remembrance Day for the Fallen of Israel's Wars

The day we remember our dear ones

On Saturday night, May 10, sirens will sound throughout the country at 10 p.m.

We call on all households to kindle a memorial light

On Sunday, May 11, sirens for a minute's silence will sound at 11 a.m., at which time, national memorial ceremonies will be held at military cemeteries, and services will take place in cemeteries where the fallen are buried.

Persons bearing weapons, including soldiers, will not be allowed into the cemeteries.

INCREASE IN FREQUENCY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES TO MEMORIAL CEREMONIES AT CEMETERIES ON REMEMBRANCE DAY FOR THE FALLEN OF ISRAEL'S WARS

ON EGGED AND DAN
SUNDAY, MAY 11, 1997

- Kiryat Shaul: Special line 127, from the new Central Bus Station (4th floor near line 5) via Derech Patah Tikva and Derech Nativ, Central Railway Station, to the cemetery, from 6:30; and return after the ceremony to Tel Aviv, Patah Tikva, Holon, Bat Yam, Rishon LeZion, Herzliya, Ra'anana and Ramat Hasharon. Egged - from Herzliya and Tel Aviv: 521, 524, 531, 535 From Kfar Sava: 575
- Nahalat Yitzhak: Buses will be added to Lines 63 and 53 from Tel Aviv - Ramat Gan, from 7:30.
- Holon: Buses will be added to Lines 40 and 42 from Ramat Gan, Line 46 from the new Central Bus Station in Tel Aviv, Line 2 from north Tel Aviv, Line 8 (Reading Station), Line 18 from the Central Railway Station Arlosoroff depot via the Law Court, central Tel Aviv.
- Patah Tikva: Buses will be added to Line 49 to Kiryat Shaul. Buses will be added to Line 8 on its route from the Patah Tikva Central Bus Station. Buses will be added to Line 82 from Bnei Brak to the Segula Cemetery.
- Haifa: Buses will be added to Lines 43, 44, and 45. After the ceremony there will be express and regular buses to Tel Aviv. Transportation will be available to the public from the parking lots, and from the Exhibition Center (Freud Junction), to the Military Cemetery in Haifa and back after the ceremony.
- Jerusalem: There will be more buses on all city routes that go to Mt. Herzl.
- Kiryat Anavim: From the new Tel Aviv Central Bus Station at 8:30. There will be more buses on Line 187 from Jerusalem.
- Nahariya: From the special departure platform at the Central Bus Station to the local cemetery, at 9:00, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30; and return after the ceremony.
- Acre: From the Central Bus Station to the Nahariya Military Cemetery at 9:00, and return after the ceremony.
- Afula: From special departure platform at the Central Bus Station to the local cemetery, at 9:00, 9:30, 10:00; and return after the ceremony.
- Kfar Warburg: From the new Tel Aviv Central Bus Station, special departure platform, at 8:30.
- Rosh Pina: From Tel Aviv Central Bus Station, at 6:45. From the new Haifa Central Bus Station, Platform 1, at 8:15; and return after the ceremony.
- Bet Shean: To Jerusalem, increased number of buses on Lines 961, 963, 964.
- Negba: Minibus from the new Tel Aviv Central Bus Station, special departure platform, at 8:30.
- Be'er Tovia: From Tel Aviv, Line 5, near the Habimah Theater, at 8:30.

Matza objects to Palestinian health resolutions

By JUDY SIEGEL

Annoyed by harsh wording of resolutions critical of Israel that were initiated by the Palestinian delegation to the World Health Assembly in Geneva, Health Minister Yehoshua Matza yesterday urged Dr. Fathi Arafat - head of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society and younger sibling of Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat - "to let your brother deal with political matters and you deal with medicine and health."

Matza, who met with Arafat during the annual assembly of the World Health Organization in Geneva, said that politics must be removed from health issues, and that Palestinians would be better off giving their attention to humanitarian matters. The

Palestinian delegation had tried to get full membership status, but was denied it because it does not represent a state.

The Palestinian delegation also presented resolutions harshly criticized Israel.

"There are great gaps between us," Matza said, but the Palestinian Red Crescent Society should concentrate on humanitarian issues.

Arafat, a pediatrician, responded that his organization's political activities at the assembly resulted from the fact that "we are not a state, thus we have to depend on Arab states. We must find wording that will suit some of the extreme [Arab] states."

Matza said Arafat promised him that he would try to moderate the resolutions and remove the political wording from them.

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The fourth discussion evening in the series "My God"
Will take place on Wednesday, May 14th 1997 at 20:00 (reception at 19:30) in The Notre Dame Center (opposite the New Gate) on the subject "God as my literary hero"
The lecturers: Prof. Yaakov Malkin, (University Tel Aviv, Director of the College of Pluralistic Judaism, Jerusalem) In 1996 he published his last book: What Do Secular Jews Believe.
Moderators: Mr. Mohamad Hurani, The Israel Interfaith Association
Mr. Jan Senkyr, The Konrad Adenauer Foundation
The discussion will be held in Hebrew and English with simultaneous translation.

THE JERUSALEM POST

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Leaking with malice

With the end of the Cold War, spy stories are becoming scarcer. The *Washington Post* report that the US Federal Bureau of Investigation is looking into the possibility of an Israeli spy called "Mega," perhaps helps fulfill the yearning for the excitement of a previous era. If the allegations prove false, however, there had better be an investigation of another sort in Washington.

According to the article, the National Security Agency (NSA) intercepted a conversation between two Israeli intelligence officers regarding a request by Israel's Ambassador Eliahu Beo-Elissar. The ambassador allegedly sought a copy of the side letter written by then-secretary of state Warren Christopher to Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat regarding the Hebron Agreement. The Israeli intelligence official reportedly told his supervisor, "The ambassador wants me to go to Mega to get a copy of this letter." The reported response was, "This is not something we use Mega for."

There are a number of striking things about this report. First, specific leaks of NSA intercepts are very rare. The NSA is perhaps the most secretive of America's intelligence agencies. NSA intercepts are among the most highly classified jewels of the intelligence community, not just for the informatoo they contain, but because they reveal intelligence capabilities — "sources and methods" in spy-speak.

This particular leak, if authentic, revealed that the NSA is capable of cracking highly encrypted Israeli telephone conversations. This is the sort of capability that NSA might be quite proud of, but would be loathe to have splashed over the front pages of major newspapers.

The fact that this leak may hurt the NSA makes the leakers doubly malicious; they are willing to compromise their own intelligence services in order to throw a wrench in US-Israeli relations. The seriousness of this act would be greatly compounded if the whole story is big mistake, as some reports indicate.

According to a report published in yesterday's *New York Post* by intelligence analyst Uri Dan, the key term "Mega" does not refer to an American official spying for Israel, but to an established network for the sharing of political information between Western intelligence services. "Mega," according to Dan, is short for "Megawatt," the code name of the network. Another network, called "Kilowatt," reportedly exists to share intelligence related to counter-terrorism efforts.

If Dan is correct, then the Israeli officials were simply engaged in routine professional consultation, as to whether the ambassador's request could or should be fulfilled by consulting an official intelligence-sharing network.

Dan's explanation is corroborated by Israeli intelligence officials who, according to *Yediot Aharonot* analyst Ron Ben-Ishai, are saying that the Americans misunderstood the intercepted conversation — in particular the reference to "Mega." Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveb also did not deny the text of the leaked intercept, but said that "I know exactly what 'Mega' is and I am sure that after we clarify this with the Americans, they will accept our explanations and the *Washington Post* report will turn out to be a wild goose chase." It looks, therefore, like "Mega" is a "what" and not a "who." If so, the *Washington Post* and probably the FBI are going to be seriously embarrassed.

In any case, the comparisons made by the *Washington Post* and many subsequent reports between this case and that of Jonathan Pollard are irresponsible and tendentious. The *Washington Post* claims that "one [US] official said ... that if it turned out that a senior US official was passing sensitive information to Israeli authorities, it could prove more serious than the espionage case involving Jonathan Jay Pollard." It takes a great leap of imagination to take a single reference to something called Mega, and build upon it the charge that Mega is not only a person, but an American; not only an American, but a senior American official; and not only a senior American official but one who is doing more damage than the worst spy in the history of Israeli-American relations.

All this, when the document in question was known to Israel — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told his cabinet during consideration of the Hebron Agreement in January that he had seen it — and whose full text was published in *Ha'aretz* just two weeks later.

Despite the understandable restrictions on the ability of US and Israeli officials to discuss intelligence matters, both countries need to work quickly to figure out the truth and take corrective action. If, as Natan Sharansky would say, 10 percent of the allegations are correct, then Israel could have a legitimate scandal on its hands. But if this story is as shot through with holes as it seems, the investigation should focus on the sources of the story, and on how to deter future attempts to sabotage the US-Israel relationship.

A cellular wake-up call

At first, the staggering growth in cellular phone use here was just an irritant for those wanting to maintain a quieter, more civilized way of life, with stories of cellular phones ringing during funeral services, military operations; and the like causing amusement and/or anger. By now, however, the metallic trilling of the little gadgets has been basically accepted as an inevitable part of modern living.

Around one in four Israelis uses a cellular phone, and he or she talks longer than users in other parts of the world. Age is no barrier; parents worried for their children's safety equip them with cellular phones; in fact, some of the first reports of the Naharayim massacre came from a schoolgirl calling home. If the *kova tembel* was the symbol of the modern Israeli circa 1948, that unflattering hat has now been replaced by a piece of plastic seemingly glued to the Israeli ear.

This phenomenon has no doubt been keeping sociologists busy and cellular phone makers happy. But a recent Australian study on laborato-

ry mice, brought to the wider public's attention by *The Jerusalem Post's* health and science reporter Judy Siegel-Itzkovich, has linked cancer with exposure to electromagnetic radiation from cellular phones. It is too early to draw any conclusions from just one study, but the research certainly demands immediate and serious attention.

To its credit, Cellcom has agreed to *The Jerusalem Post's* proposal that the telecommunications company establish a joint research fund with Pelephone and cellular phone importers to study this issue. If Pelephone wishes to prove that it, too, values its customers, it should not hesitate to support this project. As cellular phone users get younger and younger, the possible long-term damage caused by exposure to these devices must not be ignored. The suits being brought in the United States against the tobacco industry, which is finally being forced to take responsibility for the deadly effects of smoking, should provide a useful wake-up call to cellular phone companies.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SPEED KILLS

Sir, — Because speed kills, the task is to kill speed. The apparent failure of Project 700 to bring about a large reduction in road deaths was predictable. The project saturated the roads with policemen, in cars, on foot, or on motorcycles. Their output, which is what determines deterrence, probably did not exceed five to six tickets per policeman per day, or about one per hour. Much more drecking was done by the actors dressed as policemen who appeared on our TV screens every night. There is no way it is humanly possible for such a huge force to sustain a high output of tickets, even if there had been an

impact on death reduction in the first several weeks of operation. The answer: use a nationwide network of automatic roadside speed cameras. They do not get bored, tired or thirsty, and work round the clock, seven days a week. Wherever they are used, they reduce death tolls by up to 35 to 45 percent. This happened in Netanya, where, after this result was shown, the government abruptly curtailed the project. But no less important: the interurban speed limit, now 100 km/h on fast roads, has to be brought back to 90 km/h. Expecting road carnage to drop without bringing speed limits and

speeds down is equivalent to trying to eliminate lung cancer without curtailing smoking.

The public should be aware of the fact that the Ministry of Transport has laid the legal groundwork for raising interurban travel speeds to 110 km/h. One major reason is to satisfy the special interests behind Highway No. 6, whose brochures have promised 120 km/h.

Expect the death toll to continue to climb.

ELIHU D. RICHTER MD, MPH
Unit of Occupational and Environmental Medicine,
Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical School
Jerusalem.

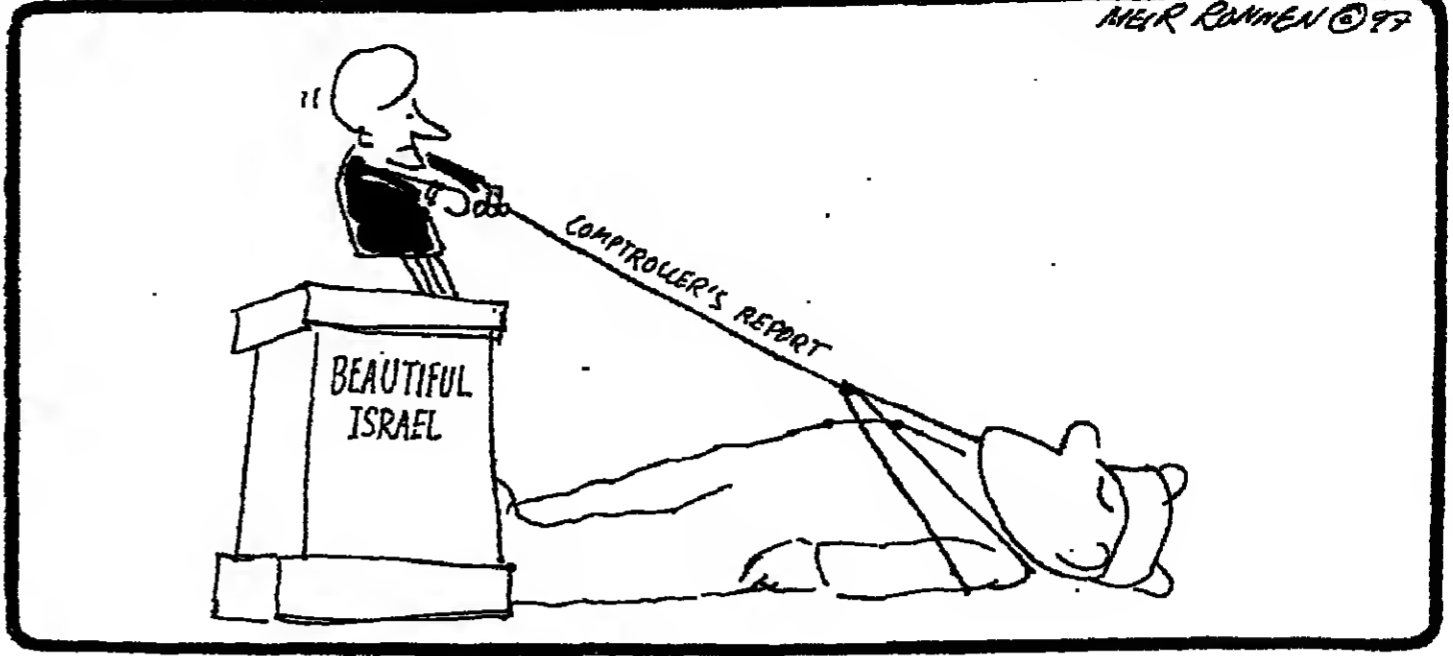
MARVELOUS TEACHER

Sir, — It was with the deepest sadness that I learned of the death at age 92 of my unforgettable teacher, Professor Nehama Leibowitz. She was no doubt one of the handful of teachers who had a lasting influence on my life. In Nehama Leibowitz's case, I credit her with my lifelong love of Torah in general and Torah commentary in particular. It was exactly 40 years ago when Nehama Leibowitz took the

bus from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv once a week in order to share her unique gift as a Torah scholar and teacher with the score of students, me among them, in the newly established Tel Aviv University, then in its original abode in Abu Kabir next to the Russian church. The problem which faced all of us who wanted to drink from the fountain of her legendary knowledge was that there wasn't a room

quite big enough to fit us all in. I was fortunate to have a big and strong friend who utilized his brawn to win us both a good seat at her lectures, which were the most fascinating of all. Nehama Leibowitz made Rashi come to life in a way only she could. I feel blessed to have been her student.

RACHEL KAPEN
West Blomfield, Michigan.



Truth, justice & understanding

This week saw the publication of the Eizenstat report on the German Reich's financial transactions. Switzerland welcomes the study as another important contribution to the clarification of transactions with gold and other assets during and after World War II.

It evaluates sources which, for the most part, have been available to the American and other governments for half a century, but which have been impossible for us to know about completely.

The report is very comprehensive. An all-embracing assessment cannot be provided today. We will now review the report thoroughly, especially as it applies to the general conduct of Swiss authorities during the war.

The Federal Council welcomes the efforts of those responsible for the study to present the situation objectively. At first glance, however, it lacks a measured recognition of the extremely difficult situation in which our country found itself militarily and to supply terms at that time.

The small Swiss nation experienced an extremely difficult time during World War II. Imagine the situation: Our country was encircled and threatened by the Nazis and the fascists; indeed, there was on weak link in the surrounding chain.

Switzerland had no choice. To survive, it had to trade with the Axis powers too. Under these conditions, neutrality was the only possibility for survival.

FLAVIO COTTI

In those dramatic days neutrality meant, for Switzerland, a tightrope walk between adaptation and resistance — always with the goal of saving the country and its human population from war, as well as preserving freedom and democracy. And that included hundreds of thousands of refugees who found themselves here.

But let us not forget: Practically

bloodedness it would have taken for the Nazi brutes to resell their victims' gold and resell it as regular central bank gold is almost beyond our comprehension.

THE report confirms that those responsible at the Swiss National Bank were not aware that "victim gold" was also melted into the gold bars.

Switzerland had no choice in World War II. It had to trade with the Axis powers

the entire population was emotionally against the Nazis. Notably, the Eizenstat report also refers to Switzerland's great economic and political importance for the Allies.

The report confirms the facts and figures already reappraised by the Swiss National Bank and various historians on gold transactions between the German Reichsbank and the Swiss National Bank, as well as with central banks of other countries.

On the other hand, it contains evidence that the Swiss National Bank bought gold bars from the German Reichsbank during World War II which contained so-called "victim gold."

If this is really true, it is grave news of the most shocking nature. The degree of cynicism and cold-

The report made public this week helps to cast light on one of the worst chapters of human history. It has always been stressed in Switzerland that this country wants the complete truth.

For this reason we have assigned an Internal Commission of Experts under the leadership of Prof. Bergier to clarify questions still open on the role of Switzerland in World War II.

The commission, which has already begun its research activity, has free access to all relevant documents. The Federal Council has asked it to include the Eizenstat Report in its investigations.

Undersecretary Eizenstat, in his report, expressly recognizes the steps Switzerland has taken recently. At the same time, the

report stresses the leading role our country has assumed in reappraising this difficult time by introducing these various measures.

I refer to the Volkler Committee set up by the Swiss Bankers' Association and the international Jewish organizations. The committee is carrying out intensive inquiries regarding potential financial claims still valid against Swiss banks.

I also wish to recall the Special Fund, capitalized at Sfr. 165 million, to benefit Holocaust victims and their needy families. The Federal Council emphatically supports the intent of the Swiss National Bank to contribute another Sfr. 100 million to this Fund.

Furthermore, the Federal Council has launched a Swiss Foundation for Solidarity, which should serve to relieve severe human need in Switzerland and abroad.

Finally, independent of government initiatives, private persons, churches, and students in Switzerland have already collected hundreds of thousands of francs to benefit Holocaust victims.

The Federal Council wants truth and justice. Inquiries must be carried out with openness and without reservation in all countries involved. Switzerland, prepared for this, has introduced the necessary steps.

The writer is the Swiss minister of foreign affairs.

Less than honest brokers

MOSHE SANBAR

Rarely does it happen that receivers of stolen goods do not know they are involved in shady business. And the shadier the business, the truer that is. It applies on a small scale, to things like automobiles and TV sets. And it applies on a very much larger scale, where vast looted sums are at stake.

The "fence" or middleman is the crucial factor in imparting a new, clean aspect to what has been criminally obtained from others. In America, the Mafia spends an astonishing up to 40 percent of its ill-gotten gains on laundering services that will make those funds untraceable.

All the countries involved in World War II became either impoverished or at least less wealthy. Switzerland alone was able to maintain its people at their former, comfortable standard of living, and even improve it.

It managed this, among other activities, by trading in the gold the Nazis plundered from their Jewish victims, and in the monetary gold they looted from the occupied countries from Holland to Hungary, selling the gold and acting, in fact, as agent for the Nazis in laundering it.

By doing what no other Western country would have contemplated, they oiled the German war machine and assisted Germany in financing its war effort.

This prolonged the war long past the time it would have lasted, with all the attendant death and misery. Thousands of soldiers died every day on both sides, and

a great many Jews perished in the concentration camps.

As the Eizenstat report says, there is no evidence that the neutral countries knew they were buying tainted gold; nor is there any proof that the Swiss knew the resold gold they were receiving from Germany contained the gold teeth of camp inmates and wedding rings torn off the fingers

of Jewish men and women. The Germans used ruses to disguise the origin of the gold they dispatched to Switzerland — for example, relabeling the bars as dating from Bismarck's time.

But it was well known that the war had depleted the German coffers — and an inescapable fact that the Swiss were consequently aware that they were trading in steele property, acting as the Nazis' principal bankers and financial brokers, handling vast sums of gold and hard-currency.

I HAVE heard Swiss friends as well as representatives of the Swiss government, including Foreign Minister Flavio Cotti and Ambassador Thomas Borer, saying that they had no choice, "since oth-

erwise the Germans would have occupied our country and destroyed our democracy." Perhaps, but that cannot excuse their guilt on either legal or moral grounds, especially their behavior after the war.

The Swiss people as a whole benefited from the Swiss banks' trading in the looted gold and from other activities, like their handling of the so-called dormant

accounts, many of them Jewish. The banks paid income tax on the profits to the Swiss authorities, and paid out dividends to shareholders. The Swiss may plead the exigencies of the time to excuse their actions, but they cannot explain their decades of inaction following the war, while so many survivors of the concentration camps languished in need and neglect.

As a survivor of Dachau who lost half of his immediate family and about 80 percent of his extended family in the Holocaust, and as someone who was among the first to bring the issue of the looted gold to public attention, I am very pleased with the Eizenstat report, and appreciate the efforts of Stuart Eizenstat.

Game warden Jean Vallissant heads the battle. Every few days, he leads a team of five hunters and four ferrets.

"They're next to the runways with the loud noise of the planes and they don't care, but when they hear a hunter approaching they take off," he said.

KNOW WHO gets the most fan mail in the world? No, not Alex Berlyne: the pope and Mother Teresa, in that order.

The top two faves receive wedding invitations, birth and death announcements, and letters by the thousands.

Author Michael Levine conducted a survey for the latest edi-

The report is a very serious and comprehensive one, carried out on a scale the survivors themselves could never have done. Only the US government could have amassed such quantities of relevant data.

Now we must look to the future, and the pressing needs of those survivors who are still among us. Their number dwindles by the day.

A voluntary humanitarian fund has been set up in Switzerland, to which the three main Swiss banks have donated \$70m, part of a projected minimum of \$250m. The Swiss parliament has legislated that the fund will aid needy survivors, about 90 percent of whom are Jews.

The Swiss government has also determined on a separate fund totaling \$4.5 billion, to be financed by the revaluation of the gold in the vaults of the Swiss National Bank; this will be sold over a period of 10 years. The Swiss people will be asked to ratify the decision in a referendum. It is proposed that this fund be used for general humanitarian purposes, including Jewish needs. In my opinion, Holocaust survivors should be at the top of the list.

After all the years of Swiss inaction and prevarication, it seems the wheels of justice are at last beginning to turn.

This article is based on an interview with the former governor of the Bank of Israel and former chairman of Bank Leumi worldwide.

thieves, who spread rumors to create a crowd and pick pockets. Police prevented one lynching after two men reported their penises disappearing.

Medical experts appeared on state television explaining in detail why penises increase and decrease in size. One doctor linked the phenomenon to fear.

POPE JOHN Paul's visit to Berlin was no blessing for a promotional agency stuck with thousands of unsold T-shirts, votive candles and other souvenirs.

The faithful bought just 1,000 of the 12,000 T-shirts commemorating the visit and only 900 of the 40,000 votive candles.

Communication Factory spent \$170,000 creating umbrellas, coins, hats and other souvenirs. The failed endeavor ruined the company.

POSTSCRIPTS

JUMBO JETS roar in and out of Paris's Roissy Charles de Gaulle airport, but the bunny rabbits that have invaded the area barely twitch a furry ear.

Rabbits are everywhere around Paris' biggest airport, eating their way through an occasional electrical wire and burrowing under runways and taxiways.

Protected by fences from their natural predators outside, they have bred like, well, rabbits — more than 50,000 roam the grounds, authorities guess.

They haunt the shrubs and lawns of office buildings surrounding the terminals. At night they eat bark off the airport's trees.

They most visibly show up to sun themselves by the hundreds alongside the runways, small brown and white dots among the jumbo jets. But they tend to avoid the tarmac and pose no danger to

planes. In a largely futile effort, the authorities have fought for 20 years to reduce the rabbit population.

Levine attributes the results to people's interest in goodness and kindness. "They represent tremendous hope to millions of people," he said. "I was a bit surprised by the number of people who invite the Pope to their wedding, but the invitations are dead serious."

MOBS IN Ghana's capital Accra beat to death seven men accused of snatching penises by witchcraft.

Victims said sorcerers simply touched them to make their genitals shrink or disappear in order to extort cash in the promise of a cure.

Police and government dismissed the stories as the work of

הכלה מן האוכל

The gesture market

A foreign dignitary who visited Gaza this week heard a curious explanation of why Yasser Arafat couldn't see him between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. Apparently the PLO leader rests during those hours, since he is worn out after sleepless nights spent moving from place to place for fear of Israeli assassins.

The visitor's astonishment grew when he heard, on the same day, that President Weizman, conceding to Arafat, had agreed to meet with him after 5.

Israel made another gesture to the Palestinians this week: It lifted the closure and allowed thousands of workers from the territories to earn a living in Israel.

The Palestinian reaction? Justice Minister Freilich Abu Medeen interpreted the new Palestinian law banning the sale of land to Jews (all Jews, not only Israelis) as carrying the death penalty.

Israel has let it be known through various channels that it is preparing several more gestures to the Palestinians, including allowing them to build extensively in Jerusalem.

What have we had in return? A Palestinian initiative in the UN for economic sanctions on Israel. That failed, but the initiative itself is hard to shrug off. It is a revival of the boycott, of the economic war of pre-Oslo days.

We have been behaving rather less generously toward Jordan. After King Hussein apologized to the families of the seven murdered schoolgirls from Beit Shemesh, he had a basis to hope for some response from Israel. Certainly not all the water needed to quench Amman's thirst, since Israel's own sources are severely limited. But before this week's crisis with Jordan erupted we could have offered the king at least part of what we will eventually be giving him anyway.

It's no secret that Yitzhak Rabin made a great concession to Hussein by being so very generous over water in the peace treaty. Even Shimon Peres said Rabin had been far too munificent.

MOSHE ZAK

Hussein knows Israel is sincere in its desire to help Jordan out over the water issue, and he understands our water problems here. So when he felt a crisis brewing, he was quick to call the premier to try and limit the damage.

If Israel is really willing to reward Hussein for his unqualified support of a warm peace between our countries, any problem can be solved.

But it makes no sense, while Hussein is working trying to persuade the ruler of Oman not to break off relations with Israel, for us to reject the king's good offices

We scatter concessions in every direction, ignoring the needs of our friends

as mediator between Israel and Arafat.

Hussein himself is eager for the role of ice-breaker, and his active mediation now could well increase his chances of gaining good standing in any permanent settlement between us and the Palestinians. This is crucial to Hussein - and yet it was our president who went off to see the PLO leader this week, not the king.

Hussein won't be fobbed off with honeyed words from us; he wants us to mind Jordanian interests in any settlement.

In spite of this, and despite our stated policy against the active involvement of the European Union, we are willing to "reward" the Europeans - except Germany - for voting against us in the UN by agreeing to EU mediation between us and Syria.

We know that the Americans oppose the European initiative; and we know that the initiative

comes from supporters of the Arab position.

Never mind all that; we are following the "drums of peace" heard by EU envoy Miguel Moratinos in Damascus, exploring his formula for renewing negotiations with Syria.

Carelessly, it seems, we scatter concessions in every direction, not seeing things in their wider context.

Colombian President Ernesto Samper is current president of the Organization of Non-Aligned Nations. At its congress in Delhi last month, several anti-Israel resolutions were passed. In the name of the organization, half of whose member states are Moslem, Samper is now touring nine member states.

Yesterday he inaugurated the official Palestinian guest house, and spent the night there.

Israel could have expressed its opposition to this precedent established in Gaza by forgoing Samper's hasty visit to Jerusalem; we could even have passed up on Samper's kind offer to mediate with the Palestinians.

It would have been an excellent gesture to Washington, which asked Israel not to host the Colombian leader. And Samper would not have been offended had we explained that it was because of his gesture to Arafat. But, for some reason, we seem to prefer those who vote against us to those who are for us.

Sometimes we even aid our worst enemies. The latest example was our indirect contribution to the panic over the chemical warfare Syria is fomenting against us. Engendered last week by the needless argument in the cabinet over who should pay for distributing gas masks, it allows Hafez Assad to make public threats of war.

Of course Assad far prefers Israel to be the side to sound the alarm. That only increases the pressure on Jerusalem to save the region from conflagration.

The writer, a veteran journalist, comments on current affairs.



Political culture always wins

DAVID NEWMAN

A mere week since the British elections, the defeated Conservative Party of former prime minister John Major finds itself in the midst of a campaign to elect a new leader of the party.

Within hours of his defeat, even before tendering his formal resignation to the Queen, Major had already announced that he would not be continuing as party leader.

It was, he said, only right that a defeated leader give way to someone else, someone who could lead the party into opposition and from there back to the next general election to be held five years down the road.

In the space of a week, no fewer than six candidates put themselves up for election: the contest will be held at the beginning of June.

Thus, within less than two months after national elections, the opposition Conservative Party will have a new leader and will be busy getting into the business of providing an active opposition to Britain's new Labour government.

Concurrently with elections for Conservative Party leader, Israel's Labour Party will finally be holding its own elections to find a successor to outgoing party chairman Shimon Peres.

By the time the contest takes place, over a year will have passed since Labour's defeat at the polls.

During that period, Peres has tenaciously held onto his position as party chairman, even attempting to find his way back into a national unity government, thereby retaining his hold over the party.

Politics is about winning elections and implementing the policies for which the candidate and his or her party stand.

Defeated candidates in both the US and Britain are quick to offer their immediate resignations. They understand that in failing to bring their party to power, they have failed to reach first base in the game.

It doesn't make much difference whether they lost by a landslide, or by a small majority of votes. Nor does it matter whether they were successful in the past, or whether this was their first attempt.

They tried, they failed, and

home they go - often to fade into the oblivion of political history. Rarely indeed, do we remember the losers.

BUT don't tell that to P. Res. Despite his long-term leadership of the Labour Party, he has yet to win an outright mandate from the Israeli public.

In the mid-1980s, he managed to squeeze into a national unity government with the Likud, then headed by Yitzhak Shamir. Labor returned to power only in 1992, following Peres's replacement as party leader by Yitzhak Rabin.

In 1996, despite the outrage following the Rabin assassination,

The Netanyahu government has implemented major changes, most notably in the peace process, with little or no parliamentary opposition whatsoever.

Compared with the opposition displayed by the Likud to the policies of the Rabin government, the Labour Party has all but disappeared.

There is something about Israeli politics that allows defeated leaders to continue grasping the reins of control. Menachem Begin successfully remained leader of the opposition for nearly 30 years before finally coming to power.

But, unlike virtually every

one delivered by the attorney-general in the Bar-On Affair, regardless of whether or not they were formally indicted. In either of these countries, they would have had to resign immediately, if only because "public standards have to be maintained."

A police chief caught speaking on his mobile phone, or a cabinet minister caught speeding would be expected to give up his post. The benefits and privileges of holding high office, of being continually in the public eye, require higher and more stringent standards of behavior than those expected of the average citizen.

Many of the Conservative Party candidates in last week's elections lost what were considered very safe seats, because they had been tainted by "sleaze" accusations far less serious than those with which Israel's premier and justice minister have been accused.

Not having resigned at the time, they were punished by the electorate. They were held directly accountable to the people who voted for them.

Unfortunately, the lack of consequences in Israel means that politicians do not have to be accountable to the voters, only to the party faithful.

But it is not merely a question of which election system is better. The real question focuses on the essence of a country's political culture.

The losers in last week's British elections accepted their defeat with good grace, handing over power within 24 hours to the incoming administration. They understood the need for an effective and immediate opposition to what they perceive as a new and inexperienced government. (Where have we heard that one before?)

Israeli politicians in general, and the Labour Party in particular, would do well to take some lessons from their British counterparts if they are to start, finally, behaving like a real opposition to the Netanyahu government.

The writer is professor of political geography and director of the Humphrey Institute for Social Research at Ben-Gurion University.

The role of legal modesty

ALLAN E. SHAPIRO

IN his decision in the Bar-On Affair, Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein "did" not set off an earthquake. It is out in his nature.

However, he did ignite a long fuse. This affair is not going to go away. It will end with a bang, not a whimper.

The short-term effect - efforts to exploit the decision - as Rubinstein correctly foretold in the first part of his summation, came from all sides of the political system. However, his expressed hope for a measured response, after his report had been thoroughly read and digested, was dashed at once.

Prime Minister Netanyahu's statement to the nation, immediately after the conclusion of the announcement of Rubinstein's decision, was, as Deputy Finance Minister David Magen properly termed it, an insult to public intelligence.

Rubinstein clearly alluded to the long-term effect of the decision in the next part of the summation. The immediate decision was to bring criminal charges only against Aryeh Deri.

However, he declared, what has been uncovered, "the involvement of an individual or individuals accused of crime in an attempt to appoint the head of the prosecution," is not only worrisome, "it is obligatory that the moral will be drawn."

How? That is not for the attorney-general to decide. On the question of the proper forum for drawing the moral, he left us, literally, up in the air, with a moving quotation from Psalms 19:13, "Who can discern errors? Clear Thou me from hidden faults."

Perhaps the key to an understanding of Rubinstein's decision is in the next verse of the psalm, which he does not quote: "Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins; That they may not have dominion over me; then shall I be faultless; And I shall be clear from great transgression."

Whether or not Rubinstein is faultless, he certainly is not presumptuous. Legal modesty is the leitmotif that passes through all 18 pages of his decision.

It is doubtful if any attorney-general in Israel's history has been as immersed in the tides of political conflict as Rubinstein. Indeed, when Yitzhak Shamir appointed him deputy attorney-general, near the end of his term of office, there was opposition. Some claimed that he had not had enough pure legal experience.

Only after another stretch as cabinet secretary, this time under Yitzhak Rabin, and then as chief legal adviser to the defense establishment and adviser to the prime minister, was he appointed to the Jerusalem District Court bench.

HE has a keen understanding of

the intertwining of law and politics. With fullest awareness of the reality, he chose for himself the role of legal modesty - dealing solely with the criminal aspects of what is, as his report acknowledges, a far more complex problem. Hence, the paradox of the grave suspicions and the meager results.

Hence, too, the decision to indict on the basis of the admissibility of the evidence, not necessarily the weight of the guilt. Hence, the wholly unsatisfactory decision, from a political point of view, to indict only Shas leader Deri, perhaps the best proof that a politically savvy

Attorney-General Rubinstein dealt solely with the criminal aspects of what is a far more complex problem

attorney-general is truly doing a superb job in his area of primary responsibility.

He may be doing a better job in avoiding judgment on the legality of politics than has the High Court of Justice. From its initial decision to bar the appointment of Yossi Glinosser as director-general of the Housing Ministry to its later decisions requiring the resignations of Deputy Minister Raphael Pinhasi and Minister Deri, the court has arrogated to itself a function that has no counterpart abroad.

Setting the criteria for eligibility to public office is a function of the confirmation process in the American system. Here, it has become the concern of the judicial system.

In view of the High Court's decisions, Section 26 of the Basic Law: The Government, which provides for the removal from office of the prime minister by a majority vote in the Knesset only after he has been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude, seems like a strange aberration.

I said in these pages soon after the Bar-On Affair developed ("They shouldn't have called the cops," February 2): "The likely conclusion is that no law was violated - which wasn't the issue in the first place - and Netanyahu will declare that he has been vindicated."

I was certainly wrong about the police. A judicial commission of inquiry, or an investigation by the state comptroller, would have had a different objective and would have reached a different conclusion.

First of all, the exclusionary

rules of evidence would not operate in the same manner. Evidence of probative value inadmissible in court would have been admissible in a non-criminal investigation. Secondly, there would be findings of fact and conclusions pertaining to all the issues involved, not merely to the side issue of criminal liability. There could also be operative recommendations.

According to past practice, the personal recommendations of a judicial commission of inquiry would be binding on the government. That is the main reason governments are loath to go that route. The power and authority of judicial commissions threatens to put them out of business.

A judicial inquiry can take place simultaneously with a criminal prosecution. This was the case in one of the earliest investigations, into the Al-Aksa fire, which went on while the criminal trial of the demented Australian Christian fundamentalist arsonist took place.

Under the new direct election law, a criminal investigation of the prime minister requires the consent of the attorney-general. Suppose that when Netanyahu asked Edna Arbel, then acting attorney-general, to commence the investigation into the Bar-On Affair, she had conditioned her agreement on government approval of the creation of a judicial commission of inquiry?

This would seem sound procedure, where the circumstances suggest a close weave of problems of political norms and criminal liability.

Maybe next time - or after the next elections?

The writer comments on legal and political affairs.

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Mobutu, in Gabon, seeks Zaire deal

News agencies

LIBREVILLE - Zaire's embattled leader Mobutu Sese Seko and a handful of fellow French-speaking African presidents held a mini-summit in Gabon yesterday as part of the hunt for a peaceful end to the war threatening his capital.

South Africa, which brought Mobutu and his civil war rival Laurent Kabila together on a South African ship on Sunday, said peace moves appeared on track and Kabila's rebels seemed to be respecting a pledge to halt their march on Kinshasa.

In Tanzania, South Africa's Deputy President Thabo Mbeki said a second meeting between Mobutu and Kabila was set for next Wednesday, adding that the place was uncertain because of Mobutu's health. He has been suffering from prostate cancer.

Mbeki gave no details of the plans for the talks.

In Cape Town, President Nelson Mandela's spokesman, Parks Mankahlana, told reporters earlier: "There is no reason to believe Mr Kabila is not keeping to his undertaking that he will stop movement of his troops on all fronts."

Kinshasa was reported calm yesterday but residents of the city of five million people remain apprehensive - a mood reflected in the capital's newspapers.

The independent *Reference Plus* quoted Mobutu's security adviser Honore Ngbanda as saying the city was a powder keg and any fire lit there could be very difficult to put out.

In Mbio, a typical dirt-poor village, people wait in fear for approaching rebel soldiers to descend from the surrounding lush green hills.

If rebel leader Kabila's claims are true, his troops are just a few km from Mbio - just an hour's drive on a well-paved road from Kinshasa, the capital and the ultimate goal of Kabila's advancing forces.

Some of the heaviest fighting of the war is going on near Mbio, accounts from aid workers suggest. Doctors Without Borders said 100 civilians were killed in the battle for Kenge, a city down the road.

Mbio's villagers went about their business yesterday, but they were alert for the first sound of gunfire and for the first sight of military vehicles rushing back from the front line.

"We're defenseless," 21-year-old villager Maya Ngansi said. "All we can do is wait. We have nowhere to run." The people of

Mbio and other villages along the road say they've seen government troops hurry by on their way to the fighting. They say foreign allied forces are stationed nearby.

"There are big guns, armored cars, tanks," villager Mpoyi Mwanba said, as he prepared to eat a meal of fried fish, caught in the nearby Zaire River.

Mbio's aging chief says he is sorry for the troubles of Mobutu. "Papa Mobutu has been our president for such a long time - of course we will be sad to see him go," chief Tabwene Modi said.

But despite their fear of Kabila's advance, the young people of the village also have hope that their lives might somehow be better under the rebels.

Three decades of Mobutu's dictatorship have made him one of the world's wealthiest politicians - and his people among the world's poorest.

"There is nothing but misery here. We young people grow old too fast," teenager Boki Kilonga said. "We'll take any leader who makes this country work."

In northeastern Zaire yesterday, the head of Rwanda's repatriation commission arrived in Kisangani to visit a refugee camp where dozens of Rwandan Hutus are dying daily.

Another draw for Kasparov and computer

NEW YORK (AP) - World chess champion Garry Kasparov and his silicon nemesis, IBM's Deep Blue computer, remained tied, with 2 points each, after playing to a draw in Game 4 of their six-game series.

Kasparov offered the draw after the computer made its 56th move of the five-hour match. The machine immediately accepted.

It was the second straight day that the 34-year-old Russian and Deep Blue finished in a deadlock.

Kasparov and the supercomputer split the first two games of the match. Kasparov said he held the advantage for much Game 4, but was unable to figure out how to win.

"I believe it was a win ... but I was tired and I couldn't figure it out," he said.

Ron Henley, a chess grandmaster from Manhattan who watched a video feed of the game at a midtown Manhattan skyscraper, agreed.

"It was a narrow escape for the computer," he said.

Yesterday, the computer played white and had the first move, an advantage sometimes compared to serving in tennis. As in the first three games, Kasparov played cautiously at the outset, seeking to avoid engagements that would allow the computer to take advantage of its superior calculating skills.

Kasparov's Game 4 opening was a notable departure from his traditionally aggressive opening strategy.

"There's no chance he'd play this opening against a human opponent," said John Fedorowicz, a chess grandmaster from Manhattan who watched the video feed.



New British Prime Minister Tony Blair (left) greets Irish Prime Minister John Bruton at 10 Downing Street yesterday. (AP)

Bruton: Bring IRA into peace talks

LONDON (Reuters) - Irish Prime Minister John Bruton said yesterday the IRA's political wing should be admitted to all-party talks on the future of Northern Ireland next month if the group announced an immediate, genuine cease-fire.

Bruton was speaking ahead of talks in London later in the day with Tony Blair, which will be the new British prime minister's first meeting with a fellow head of government.

He told BBC radio the new Blair government, with a 179-seat majority in parliament and five years of government in front of it, represented "a great opportunity" to move things forward in Northern Ireland.

Bruton said now was the time for an Irish Republican Army (IRA) cease-fire "clearly accompanied by a political change of heart and deeds matching that political change of heart."

It should be one "where people looking into their eyes, so to speak, can see that in their hearts this time they mean it." In that case, Bruton said, there was no reason why Sinn Fein, the IRA's political arm which won two seats in Britain's May 1 election, should not join all-party talks on the future of the province quickly.

"If there was a cease-fire now and if it was one that was really full-hearted and you could see that it was full-hearted ... I see no reason why they should not be in the talks when the talks resume (on June 3)," Bruton said.

The talks, chaired by former US senator George Mitchell, began last June but had made little progress by the time they were temporarily halted ahead of the British election.

The outgoing British Conservative government always insisted the IRA should begin to dismantle their huge stocks of weapons and

explosives before being admitted to the all-party talks.

But no such insistence appeared in Blair's Labor Party election manifesto, which committed his government to reconciliation of republican aspirations for a united Ireland and loyalist insistence that Northern Ireland remain British.

The IRA called a cease-fire in its 25-year war to oust Britain from Northern Ireland in September 1994, but continued to prepare for further violence.

The cease-fire ended in February last year with a bomb blast in the Docklands area of east London which killed two people.

During the run-up to the British election, the IRA repeatedly snarled up Britain's rail and road networks by warnings - sometimes genuine, sometimes not - of bombs planted on busy motorways or rail junctions.

DERI

Continued from Page 2

At the Golani and Nahalal junctions in the North, dozens of Deri supporters held demonstrations.

Item adds:

The High Court should throw out a petition by Labor MKs Yossi Beilin and Yona Yahav calling for the indictment of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Justice Minister Tzabi Hanegbi, the State Attorney's Office said yesterday, in its response to one of the several petitions filed in connection with the Bar-On Affair.

The state attorney claimed that the two MKs submitted their peti-

tion without having bothered to read the state attorney's report on the affair carefully.

If they had read it, the response said, they would have noted that Netanyahu and Hanegbi are not being indicted because there is not enough evidence to support an indictment. Thus the petitioners' claim that the decision not to indict constitutes the ignoring of evidence is baseless.

Dr. Shmuel Sa'adia yesterday submitted a petition to the High Court of Justice demanding that a state commission of inquiry be appointed to look into the Bar-On Affair, calling the decision-making process to the Bar-On appointment completely defective and a mockery of the law.

Another draw for Kasparov and computer

NEW YORK (AP) - World chess champion Garry Kasparov and his silicon nemesis, IBM's Deep Blue computer, remained tied, with 2 points each, after playing to a draw in Game 4 of their six-game series.

PERES

Continued from Page 2

The invitation to Begin came from MK Uzi Baran who will debate Begin on the issue. Baran explained that he asked Begin "because his views are not watered down like those of the prime minister and those around him. I

thought our delegates should hear an unadulterated voice from the Right. Begin enthusiastically accepted my invitation."

Another Likud member, Tel Aviv Mayor Roni Milo, will take part in a panel discussion on what the future political map may look like. Various other panels will include top Palestinian officials, including Faisal Husseini.

ROSS

Continued from Page 1

Such concessions would include increased building for Arabs in Jerusalem or the return of permanent resident status to the more than 1,000 Jerusalem Arabs that lost it because they left to live elsewhere.

Another possible concession would be to increase the size of the 2% further redeployment from area C.

Regarding the likelihood of a breakthrough, "I don't think anybody in the national authority is optimistic," said Kanafani.

Asked on Channel 1 if a resumption of the peace talks is in the offing, Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh replied, "I am sorry to say I still cannot say that is so."

Israel is demanding that Arafat crack down on terror before

resuming talks.

Ross met Netanyahu again yesterday evening. He is due to meet Weizman in Caesarea tomorrow, then to meet Arafat in Ramallah. Afterwards, Ross intends to go to Egypt in an attempt to persuade the Egyptians to push the Palestinians to resume the peace talks.

Ross also met European Union envoy Miguel Moratinos in Jerusalem and the two tried to coordinate their positions on the peace process.

Moratinos, who is completing a shuttle mission in the Middle East, met Foreign Ministry Director-General Eytan Bentsur and Weizman's director-general Arye Shumer. He reiterated the position that Syria is interested in peace, and that Syrian President Hafez Assad wants to negotiate with the Netanyahu government.

Burglar needs police like a hole in the head

YORK, Pennsylvania (AP) - A man shot in the head as he attempted a burglary sat on his front porch with a bullet between his eyes waiting for police to arrive, authorities say.

Michael Hughes, 30, was treated at York Hospital before being arraigned on charges of burglary, theft, receiving stolen property and reckless endangerment for the incident.

Police said Hughes broke into the home of Kenneth Miller, then tried to escape in Miller's truck after he arrived home.

When the driver ignored Miller's order to stop, Miller fired a shot from his .22-caliber pistol through the windshield, hitting the burglar.

Police said Hughes drove some about a kilometer away and his family called for help.

Prosecutors announced they would not bring charges against Miller for shooting Hughes.

Falling fuel tank kills 6 in Karachi

KARACHI (AP) - Six people were killed yesterday when the pilot of a French-made Mirage jet jettisoned his burning auxiliary fuel tanks over a congested neighborhood in this southern port city.

Another nine people were rushed to Karachi's Abbas Shabeeb Hospital with serious burn injuries, said Dr. Imtiaz Memon.

Several of the injured were in critical condition, said Memon.

"We have declared a state of emergency in the hospital because we do not have facilities to treat so many serious burn victims at once," Memon said in a telephone interview.

The Pakistan Air Force Mirage jet was on a routine exercise when its two auxiliary fuel tanks caught

fire, said air force Wing Commander Aftab Safdar.

"The aircraft was on a routine training mission when it developed a serious in-flight emergency," an air force statement said. "In a bid to prevent the aircraft from crashing over a populated area, which would have resulted in a major catastrophe, the pilot had to jettison the tanks."

One burning tank landed on a two-story apartment building.

The other landed in an empty lot next door. However four other small apartment buildings on the same street also caught fire.

Five of the dead were from the same family. The youngest victim was five years old, said his mother, Mubina Yasen. The sixth victim also a child was visiting when

the tragedy occurred.

Mrs. Yasen stood outside the smoldering apartment building wailing. As she rocked back and forth she said she had left the apartment building earlier yesterday to visit a relative. Her oldest child was in his late 20s.

When she returned the building was destroyed and her family dead.

"What happened? I don't know. My family is gone," she cried.

Her husband, an ice seller, was outside the apartment building when the burning fuel tank landed on his home.

"I heard this explosion and I saw my house in flames," he said tears streaming down his cheeks. "I had just stepped out on to the street."

With great sorrow we announce the passing in old age of our dear

NATHAN GOTTLIEB
on May 8 and

MOLLIE GOTTLIEB
on April 24

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Brother, Joseph Gottlieb
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Sister, Gitel Mesch
Brother, Emanuel Gottlieb
Sister, Reggie Weiss
and all their nieces and nephews

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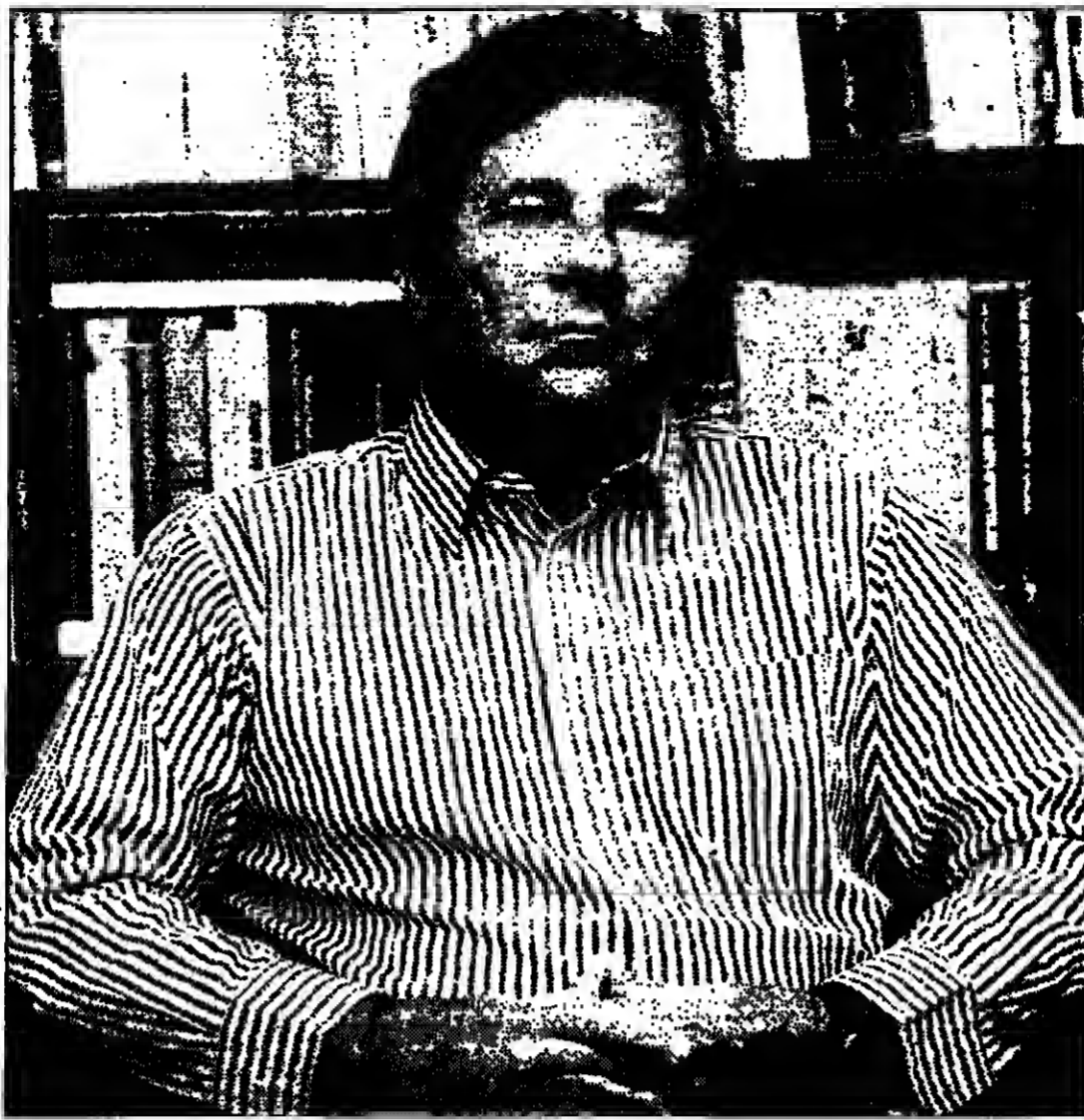
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הכלה מן האצל

An insider's view of the Jordan rift

In his first newspaper interview since returning from Amman, former ambassador to Jordan Shimon Shamir talks to Dan Izenberg about strained relations between the two countries



Prof. Shimon Shamir: There have been too many cases of misunderstanding, insufficient coordination, use of improvised and irregular channels and leaks about secret meetings. (Ariel Jeruzolimski)

Middle East expert Prof. Shimon Shamir returned to his home in Jerusalem two months ago after serving for the past two years as Israel's first ambassador to Jordan. Though he is an academic by profession, his tour in Amman marked his second diplomatic posting. He served as ambassador to Egypt under the national unity government of Yitzhak Shamir and Shimon Peres, from 1988 to 1990. He resigned his post after the national unity government broke up and prime minister Shamir formed his right-wing government, because he disagreed with the new government's policy. Though appointed by prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and then, foreign minister Peres after the signing of the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty in 1994, he stayed on under Netanyahu because the latter announced that he would abide by the Oslo Accords. Shamir said he accepted the Amman posting on condition that he would serve no more than a two-year term. His return, he said, had nothing to do with political differences with the Netanyahu government, although he noted that he came back before the prime minister ordered construction to begin at Har Homa.

of the peace treaty which deals with water. According to the text, "Israel and Jordan shall cooperate in finding sources for the supply to Jordan of an additional quantity of 50 million cubic meters of water of drinkable standards [per year]. To this end, the joint water committee will develop within one year from the entry into force of the treaty a plan for the supply of the above-mentioned additional water to Jordan." According to the treaty, therefore, we are a year-and-a-half past the deadline. I don't remember a single meeting involving Israeli ministers or prime ministers in which the Jordanians did not raise this issue and explain over and over again that in view of the water shortage in Jordan, they would very much like to see this article implemented. The first time Israel came up with a plan to provide this 50 million cu.m. was very recently, under the present government. [Former] water commissioner [Meir] Ben-Meir proposed a plan that was positively received by the Jordanians. He showed that by the intensification of aquaculture and by the treatment of wastewater in Israel, the requisite amount could be provided to Jordan without in any way lowering the level of water supply for the Beit She'an Valley region. The plan would cost about \$150 million and requires further study and planning. The problem that emerged was the question of cost. As the Jordanians put it, there are always three criteria that have to be examined - quantity, quality and cost. The quantity and quality of the water are specified in the agreement. The costs are not. The water article in the body of the peace treaty specifies that there is a genuine water shortage and solutions should be found by locating new sources of water.

And here, desalination is very important, as well as treatment of wastewater and the use of modern technologies. The problem is that when you come to these methods, you encounter the question of costs. Who's going to pay for it? All this is not clear and there are differences between the Israeli and Jordanian positions. I am personally confident they can be overcome. What is needed is a very serious approach to the problem and very intensive talks between the two parties. The talks must not be postponed, because the problem is not going to disappear. Do you agree with the prime

minister's description of the clash between Jordan and Israel over the water agreement, the cancellation of the memorial ceremony at Naharayim and the misunderstanding between the countries as to whether a meeting between Netanyahu and Crown Prince Hassan had in fact been scheduled as a "mini-crisis"? These events should be seen in context of the nature of the relations between the Jordanian and Israeli governments today. It is no secret that mutual confidence has eroded in recent months. I can quote a close adviser of our prime minister who said that while the previous government had a credit line of six months, the present

government has a credit line of two weeks. He said that before the dispute over Har Homa began, I suspect that were he to say it today, the credit line would be less than two weeks. In other words, there is today an atmosphere of impatience, apprehension and suspicion in the relations between Israel and Jordan, and in this context it can be understood why issues develop the way they have in recent days. We definitely face a problem of communication and dialogue management. Since the formation of the new government in Israel, there have been too many cases of misunderstanding, insufficient coordination, use of improvised and irregu-

lar channels and leaks about secret meetings, all of which have eroded the effectiveness of the political dialogue. There are many examples of this, most of them well known. Remember the clash over the dates for the visit to Amman by Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai last February, or the fact that there was no coordination between the visit of Netanyahu's adviser Dore Gmid to King Hussein and the government's decision to open the Western Wall tunnel. Such blunders create embarrassment and erode the credibility of the parties concerned. How important is the Oslo agreement and the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians in determining King Hussein's attitude towards Israel? It's a well-known fact that the Oslo agreement took the Jordanians by surprise, but the country's leaders are pragmatic. They know where their interests lie, they read the map and they formulate their policies accordingly. Today, Jordanian policy clearly supports the Oslo peace process and would like it to continue. I would go even farther. Difficulties arising in the implementation of this agreement are now seen as detrimental to the interests of Jordan. Jordan is very attentive to what is happening in the territories, because events there have an immediate bearing on the situation in the country itself. Jordanians would go even so far as to say that an unstable situation in the West Bank could, in a worst-case scenario, create another wave of emigration to the East Bank. They say they managed to absorb three such waves in the past - 1948, 1967 and 1991 - and they don't want to face the threats and dangers of another. So Jordan now supports the process and supports the effort of the Palestinians to bring this process to their goal, which is the establishment of a Palestinian state. Do you believe Jordan serves as an honest broker in times of crisis between Israel and the Palestinian authority? On occasion, Jordanian participation in the peace process has been very constructive, most dramatically on the eve of the signing of the Hebron agreement. The king played an important role and

the Jordanians are very proud of it. They would like it to continue, though not at the expense of the Egyptian role. Behind this involvement is the fact that Jordanians, Israelis and Palestinians are inseparably bound by a whole network of interests. There can be no agreement between Israel and the Palestinians that will not affect Jordan. Therefore, the Jordanians have a legitimate interest in being in dialogue with both parties. Unlike Egypt, Jordan is linked to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process by existential interests, and therefore, my personal opinion is that any solution we can envisage for the future must bring into consideration these three parties. As the peace process evolves, the cooperation between them will inevitably increase and intensify. Is the Jordanian government disappointed with other aspects of the peace with Israel? Everyone is familiar with the Jordanian complaints that the "fruits of peace" have not materialized. In fact, however, Jordan did benefit economically from peace. There was debt forgiveness, not only by the US, and there was a wave of gestures from the industrialized world meant to assist the Jordanian economy. On the macro level, the fruits of peace are evident and admitted. The problems appear on the micro level. The complaint you hear most frequently in Jordan is that the economic plight of the man on the street has not improved; as a matter of fact, in many cases it has even deteriorated since 1994. What we face here is a situation of exaggerated expectations and insufficient awareness of the need for time for economic changes to be achieved. Many positive things are happening. There are industrial joint ventures which provide Jordanians with employment, investment, production and export, and provide Israelis with access to the Jordanian labor market. So far, there haven't been more than about a dozen such plans, but the potential is enormous. Israeli tourism, and tourism originating from Israel, are also important factors. But on the whole, we must recognize that all of this falls short of expectations. Continued on Page 9

The nightmare of VX gas

Home defense against a Syrian chemical weapons attack is not being taken seriously by the government, Steve Rodan reports

The scenario runs like this: The year is 1999 and Iran has secretly achieved a breakthrough and finally assembled nuclear warheads. Syria, Tehran's ally, decides that the time is right for an offensive on the Golan Heights. The Syrian military begins with a massive barrage of artillery and rocket fire as hundreds of tanks stream down the Golan Heights past Israeli defenses. At the same time, hundreds of conventional missiles rain down on Israeli airports and army bases in the north. Israel launches a counterattack on the Golan and at the same time responds with a crushing air attack on Damascus and key strategic installations in Syria. That's when Syria pulls out its ace in the hole. The ace is the Scud-C tipped with a chemical warhead. The chemical is VX. A nightmare? Perhaps. But the scenario is being discussed in the cabinet and in the Israeli military and intelligence establishment. And the key is VX, a toxin deadlier than just about any other chemical weapon and which can last in the targeted area for days. For defense planners, the most worrisome aspect is that many in the IDF and virtually everybody in the government have simply not taken the Syrian chemical weapons capability seriously enough to respond with a credible civil defense program. Money for the current program to upgrade civil defense equipment, such as gas masks, has run out as the government relies on what IDF officers say are outdated studies that claim that only hundreds will die in a chemical weapons attack. "The chemical threat has not only not abated, it has increased," says MK Yossi Sarid, who is petitioning the High Court for renewed government funding for the gas mask program. "The sealed room is not an alternative. If we don't find money in the next few days civil defense stations will close."

ment has refused to acknowledge the threat. For Danny Shoham, a reserve colonel in intelligence and a researcher at Bar-Ilan University's Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, VX is the kind of killer chemical that can tip the scales in Damascus in favor of an attack. "In a few short years, Iran will have nuclear weapons," he says. "I am sure that Iran will have nuclear weapons and give Syria a nuclear umbrella. The minute that Syria has the umbrella it will not hesitate to use chemical weapons against Israel because it won't fear an Israeli nuclear attack." VX was developed by the US in the 1960s but a few years later the Russians came up with their own version. This nerve gas was far more toxic than the American model. Unlike other nerve gases, such as Sarin, VX evaporates extremely slowly so winds can't blow it away. Also unlike Sarin, VX penetrates the skin. Intelligence sources say that for nearly two years they received reports that Syria had the Russian version of VX. But several weeks ago, new reports came in that the Syrians have managed to install the gas in a Scud warhead. Suddenly, Damascus acquired the capability of firing the killer chemical anywhere in Israel. The result, military sources say, is that Israel's civil defense program against a chemical missile attack has been thrown in disarray. The IDF's Home Front spent millions on gas masks and serums for every Israeli but this equipment is insufficient against VX. Shoham says the equipment the Home Front distributed was based on a chemical attack using Sarin, which is highly toxic but a light gas that will stay in the air for only hours. Israelis who manage to lock themselves inside sealed rooms themselves inside sealed rooms could withstand a VX attack. But those stranded outside would be virtually helpless as the equipment they have been given. "The VX program requires

major changes to the Home Front program," Shoham says. "Whoever decided to give masks assumes that the sealed room and the serums were not enough for protection against a chemical attack. The serum is effective but does not give full protection. The gas masks can give 100 percent effectiveness if the gas does not penetrate the skin." The government's response, however, has been to play down the issue. State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat, in her report released on Wednesday, details how successive governments since the Gulf War dismissed the possibility of a chemical weapons attack as virtually impossible. For years, the prospect of a chemical weapons attack was virtually secret. The first State Comptroller's Report that dealt with civil defense in 1985 was a classified document. The report became public only in September 1993. By that time, Israelis knew what had been obvious to the IDF and the government: that at least a third of the gas masks distributed during the 1991 Gulf War were ineffective against chemical weapons. The result was an IDF program to improve the protection of civil-defense equipment given to Israelis. Money was poured into developing a better gas mask in which nose size could fit all. The State Comptroller's report said that didn't work and the project was shelved. At the same time, the government began chipping away at the Home Front's program. When originally approved in January 1992, the gas-mask program budget for the years 1991-5 was NIS 520 million. When the Home Front returned to ask for funding for a program for the years 1996-2000, the budget request was NIS 600 million. This time, then-prime minister and defense minister Shimon Peres ordered a smaller program. The Home Front presented a NIS 470 million budget. In June 1996, the center presented its draft and by October the final version was released to the government. The study, entitled "The protection system for the home front," asserted that its assessments were based on several studies prepared by the military and Defense Ministry, including one by the IDF in January 1996



Will this really help? The government and military cannot agree on how to protect civilians from a chemical attack. (Paul Meiling)

for Military Research, owned by the Rafael Armaments Development Authority. The center was asked for a concept of an efficient civil defense protection program. The IDF's Home Front opposed the study and by March 1996 refused to cooperate with the center. Officers said the IDF Planning Division was already conducting a similar study and warned that the Rafael-owned center did not have the necessary knowledge of chemical weapons and threat assessments. In June 1996, the center presented its draft and by October the final version was released to the government. The study, entitled "The protection system for the home front," asserted that its assessments were based on several studies prepared by the military and Defense Ministry, including one by the IDF in January 1996

The study virtually dismissed the prospect of a chemical weapons attack on Israel. The conclusion was that the gas-mask program was unnecessary. "The chance that the scenario accorded to the Home Front will actually materialize and that the protection set could contribute to the potential [chemical weapons] is very low," the comptroller quotes the study as saying. "The center assessed that a chemical weapons attack is an extremely radical and grave scenario and that a scenario that a chemical weapons attack would occur at the beginning of the war is extremely radical and is not reasonable." Still, the study assessed the results of a chemical weapons attack on an Israeli community. The comptroller quotes the study as saying that full protection - including gas masks and serums - from a chemical weapons attack would save

220 lives and 60 moderately injured people. The study does not regard this as much of an achievement. "The output needed for the continuation of the protection program in proportion to the savings of casualties is not much higher than accepted in saving lives in the country and world," the study says. "It would mean the saving of each life would cost \$50 million [since Israel's entire long-range civil-defense program will cost NIS 4.9b.] and this is much higher than that computed in the health system. The average cost of improving the condition of a victim of chemical attack by injections is estimated at \$3 million, much higher than acceptable in other areas." The bottom line, the study says: "It is possible to find more worthwhile alternatives." An alternative, the study says, would be to improve an alert system to a

chemical weapons attack as well as a plan to increase awareness on how to use sealed rooms. THE CENTER'S study was enough to change some key opinions in the government. On July 7, the government scrapped an NIS 60 million gas-mask distribution effort, and by September Finance Minister Dan Meridor recommended that the entire NIS 460 million gas-mask revitalization program be terminated. Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai agreed. Instead, the cabinet decided to limit the guidelines for civilian protection to sealed rooms. It called for ways to establish a special room for protection against a missile attack by inserting special windows while leaving the outer walls intact. Continued on Page 8

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ISRAEL

Admiring democracy from a distance

What if Bar-On had been a Palestinian? By posing that question, a PA lawyer wound up in jail and drew attention to the limits of democracy under Arafat, Jon Immanuel reports

Most people in the Palestinian Authority-controlled areas hoped the Netanyahu government would fall, and so the Bar-On Affair was covered widely in the Palestinian press. But an educated minority, intrigued by the mechanism of the Israeli investigation, also began to wonder why such an exposé could not take place on the Palestinian side of the fence. Jamil Salameh, a lawyer in the PA Planning Ministry, went so far as to put the question in writing. He offered an article entitled: "What would have happened if Bar-On had been a Palestinian?" to the in-house journal of the Gaza Bar Association.

The answer came swiftly. His legal colleagues reported to public prosecutor Khalid al-Qidrah, who ordered his arrest for slander and security offenses. Police interrogated Salameh for five hours, and kept him in Gaza central jail for nine days without charges.

"I thought the article would be controversial, but I didn't think I would be arrested," he said on his release last Sunday. News of the arrest, like the article itself, never saw the light of day. Newspaper publishers said it was a matter between lawyers.

IN GENERAL, it seems that democracy is something the Palestinians admire from a distance, but have a hard time

applying to their own situation. Articles in the press demand more democracy, but never condemn PA Chairman Yasser Arafat for not providing it.

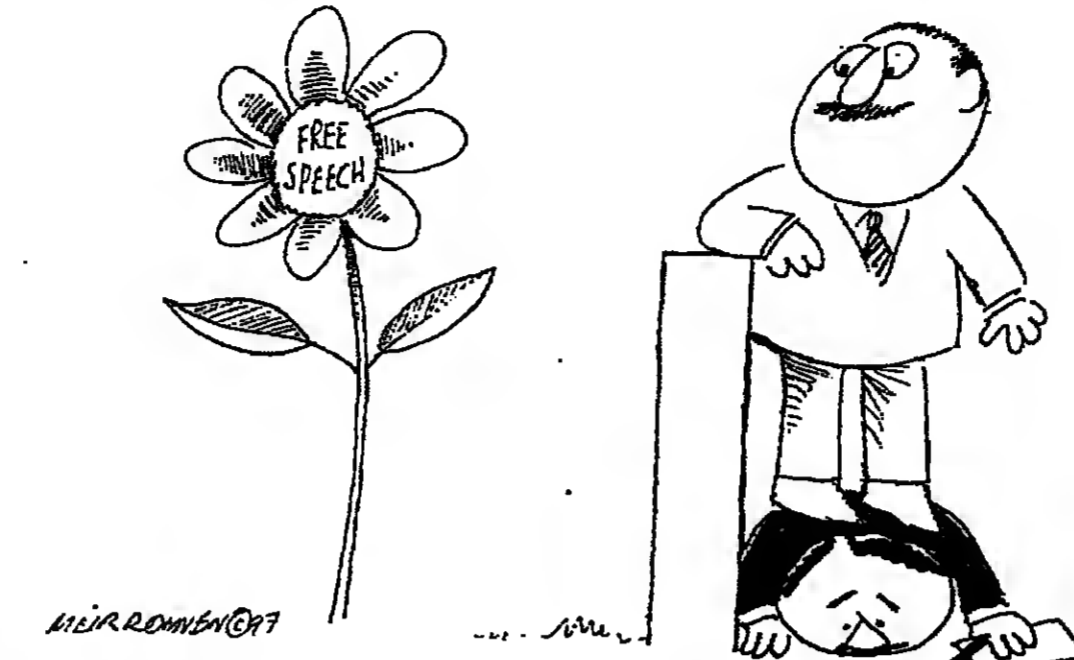
Any writer who actually compares Israeli democracy favorably against the PA lack of it can find himself under interrogation for "slander" and "security offenses" like Salameh, or like human rights activist Dr. Iyad Sarraj, who spent two weeks in jail last year for saying that people found the situation in Gaza worse under the PA than under Israeli occupation.

"We do not criticize President Arafat directly. We do not get personal," says Radwan Abu-Ayyash, director of the Palestinian Broadcasting Authority.

Not getting personal is the problem for Hania Bitar, business manager of the English-language *Jerusalem Times*, since the "Palestinian system of government revolves around the persona of the president."

She told a forum of the Israel-Palestinian Center for Research and Information (IPCRI) on the press and democracy last week that even if there was a law defending journalists' rights, "it would not provide a shield, because the political system is not bound by the law."

Popular opinion is also of little help, since Palestinian society, whatever lip service it may give democracy, "is not a participatory society. There are



few letters to the editor," she said.

In a recent poll by the Nablus-based Palestinian Center for Research and Information, Israeli democracy and respect for human rights were rated more highly than the American equivalents. But although the poll of 1,334 awarded the PA only a 50% democracy rating, it showed that 79% approved of the Palestinian presidency.

THIS doesn't mean Palestinian censorship is particularly well organized. Bitar noted that *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, published by the PLO's former Moscow envoy Nabil Amr, or *Al-Ayyam*, headed by Akram Haniye, a former Arafat aide in Tunis, can get away with more than the now defunct pro-Jordanian *An-Nahar* or *Al-Quds*, which is the largest-selling daily by far and

is independently financed.

Al-Ayyam, for example, has a weekly column which exposes shady deals and other corruption.

But the recent teachers' strike, put down by Preventive Security Chief Col. Jibril Rajoub (and the first under Arafat's rule), hardly made it into print.

It was considered a security issue because Arafat had personally told the teachers to go back to work, fearing strikes among dozens of other sectors, including the police. However, *Al-Ayyam* at least reported Rajoub's arrest of 25 strike leaders.

In spite of this, *Al-Quds* denies that it is under more constraints than any other paper. Publisher Marwan Abu-Zuluf, for example, takes credit for exposing the Great White

This affair involved the PA Ministry of Supplies taking flour which had reached its expiry date from a Nablus warehouse, repackaging it in Israel and selling it in Palestinian towns at a profit to the PA and its appointed middlemen.

The relatively wide coverage given the scandal owes something to the fact that it did not involve Arafat's prestige, but did directly affect the lives of thousands of ordinary Palestinians. However, while *Al-Quds* was the first paper to report it, the scam first went public in the legislative council, where it was raised by Nablus deputy Husam Khader, a Fatah leader from Balata refugee camp who had the "evidence" - Israeli trucks moving out of a Nablus flour warehouse.

It also demonstrates the coun-

cil's potential as a shield for the press, even though its ability to protect anyone with enforceable laws is limited.

And the council itself may be in the process of being silenced. Independent TV stations which tried to broadcast the last four council sessions found themselves jammed. Though there is not yet enough evidence to accuse the PA of jamming for political reasons, this is the way it is perceived by the broadcasters.

Exposing consumer scandals like the expired flour is one thing, but exposing the way the PA itself bands out contracts and keeps its accounts is another. *Al-Bilad*, a Ramallah weekly edited by writer Asad Asad, translated an article from Israel's *Globe* financial newspaper about the business dealings in the PA of former General Security Service agent Yossi Ginosar. The translation earned him 24 hours in jail.

WHICH IS not to say the Israeli media is above reproach. Israeli censorship may be more subtle, but it is not absent.

For example, Israel Radio Palestinian Affairs reporter Yoni Ben-Menachem told the IPCRI forum that he was recently prevented from broadcasting items already published in *Al-Ayyam* and broadcast on the Voice of Palestine. They concerned the army raids in Tzurif on the day the body of soldier Sbaron Edri was discovered, and the arrest of four Beduin after the murder of two female hikers in Wadi Kelt.

But Ben-Menachem's main criticism was that journalists who had been leaders of the intifada and clarions of democracy under Israeli rule were now "working with the PA, serving different mediums of propaganda. The press is still seen as an arm of the revolution."

Bassam Eid, director of the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, stresses that the time for a free press is now, since political democracy won't come without it. He asks: "who would have thought that supporters of these freedoms would give them up so easily? Who would have expected journalists to attack human-rights groups?"

He cites a forum on human rights at Al-Quds University which discussed PA violations for 170 minutes and Israeli violations for 10 minutes. Afterwards, an article appeared in *Al-Ayyam* detailing the Israeli violations only, and no article appeared in *Al-Quds* at all, although it had a reporter there.

The newspaper which most freely reports PA abuses of human rights is *Al-Risala*, the Gaza newspaper of the Islamic Salvation Front and Hamas. It is given a certain license, like a court jester, because people expect it to oppose the PA, but it also knows it can be closed at any moment.

And even Eid acknowledges that *Al-Risala*'s apparent support for democracy is largely an expression of opposition to Arafat.

For his part, publisher Abu-Zuluf says he acts in an attempt to create understanding, not from self-censorship. "We have to avoid hurting both sides," he explains.

Last week, for example, he harped a cartoon comparing the Holocaust with the 1948 massacre of Palestinians at Deir Yassin.

"Sometimes the cartoonist over-expresses himself," he explained. "Attempts to compare Jewish and Arab experiences, as well as Israeli and Palestinian governments, inevitably lead to misunderstandings."

GAS

Continued from Page 7

The ministers decided that an interministerial committee would present recommendations in three months.

The Home Front Command howled. It called the research center's study faulty and biased and disputed its recommendations to terminate the gas-mask program. The command presented its own report that varied widely with the assessments of the research center.

Home Front officers accused the research center of ignoring the command's report and basing assessments on a 1990 Israel Air Force report. "It searched for every way to present the least number of casualties even if this was not based on updated research," the command's report says.

The Home Front's report asserts that a chemical-weapons attack would kill between 1,300

and 2,300 people and leave 1,200-2,900 injured. The figures are dependent on the number of enemy missiles as well as the density of the targeted community. Gas masks could save all of these people.

The BESA Center's Shoham says the study appears to base its assessments on a chemical-weapons attack using Sarin rather than VX.

"I am doubtful whether these scenarios are related to VX," he says.

"It appears more related to Sarin. My assessment is that the Home Front's assessment is more realistic than the military research center's." Indeed, some defense analysts say a VX attack could be up to 10 times more lethal than a Sarin bombardment. This means that as many as 25,000 people could be killed in a VX missile attack.

Still, the issue remains fuzzy. The comptroller's latest study shows that even the IDF has trouble agreeing on the damage of a chemical weapons attack.

Various IDF reports disagree over such questions of how much toxins are contained in a chemical warhead and how much is needed to kill.

Regardless, the Home Front report changed Mordechai's mind. On October 23, the cabinet rescinded the termination of the gas-mask program. In addition, it appointed a committee headed by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's military secretary, Maj.-Gen. Zev Livne, to determine the conception of protection and the budget needed.

But little followed. In December, the team finished its work but didn't present its recommendations. Meanwhile, the Home Front's budget ran out and in January the IDF told the comptroller that the revitalization program remains without funds.

Sarid, who served as a minister in the Peres and Rabin governments, acknowledges that he supported the Home Front budget cuts in the gas-mask program. But he says he couldn't

imagine the current crisis in the peace process forged by the Labor-led coalitions.

"In a certain way, it [the budget cut] was too hasty," he recalls.

"But I didn't forecast that there would be another government that would lead us to a rapid deterioration." Today, Israelis don't take the equipment they were given by the IDF seriously. In a recent poll taken by Haifa University for the Home Front, 60 percent of those surveyed don't believe that the gas masks can protect them. About 75 percent expressed fear that they would be hurt in a chemical-weapons attack.

For its report, the comptroller's study says 2.2 million, or 54 percent, of the 4.1 million eligible Israelis have collected their gas masks and other equipment needed to protect against a chemical or biological weapons attack. The 1.9 million Israelis who did not report to civil defense stations have either faulty masks or no equipment at

all.

The level of confidence in the IDF equipment is so low that Home Front Command officers say they're considering distributing stickers and toys to children who bring their parents to civil defense stations to pick up gas masks.

The comptroller is not surprised. Since 1992, Ben-Porat has called for the replacement of gas masks with those that cover the entire head. But the prototypes failed as carbon dioxide in the mask reached dangerous levels.

Moreover, the direction in developing a new mask remains in dispute. Today, the IDF, the comptroller says, continues to conclude that the reliability of its gas masks is low. The comptroller says one answer is to open R&D to hiding in an attempt to garner new ideas.

For their part, government ministers don't seem to be pressed for the need for civil defense. In a cabinet session on May 2, ministers agreed to a

request by the military for an additional NIS 50 million for the resumption of the gas-mask program. But they insisted that the money come from the defense budget.

The cabinet decided to table the discussion to a later date.

Several of the ministers who objected to further cuts in the budget were told that any increase in the Home Front Command would come out of spending cuts currently being planned.

Shoham of the BESA Center says the Home Front Command had better be prepared to start thinking of introducing special bodysuits to protect against a VX attack. Even the suits, he says, might only be a temporary solution as Israel's enemies such as Iran and Syria perfect chemical and biological weapons to overcome the latest protection technology.

"What is true is that the pace of the threat assessments is rapid," he says. "The Arabs will have this much today but in six

months that might change and in a year it will certainly change."

The question some strategists are asking is whether such a civil-defense program is worth the cost and effort. Perhaps the money saved in gas masks, serums, bodysuits and other equipment should be invested in deterrence - missiles that can destroy and kill 10 times more than the capability of Israel's enemies?

Military chiefs today say no and Shoham agrees. A well-funded and formidable civil-defense program against nonconventional weapons could persuade Israel's enemies that their warheads will cause little damage. The way would then be clear to a massive Israeli retaliation.

"If we arrive at the optimal protection the enemy could come to the conclusion that there is no point in using the weapons because it would not achieve the effect he seeks," Shoham says. "This is what we want."



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Who paved the road to Rabin Square?

A controversial documentary by Michael Karpin has re-opened the debate over who was behind the incitement campaign that preceded Rabin's murder, Larry Derfner reports

A reminder and an expose" is how executive producer David Mosevics describes the documentary *The Road to Rabin Square*, which traces the incitement that preceded Rabin's assassination. The film will be shown on Channel 2's *Fact* program on Tuesday night.

Written and directed by former Channel 1 journalist Michael Karpin, the 60-minute film is filled with the signature TV news footage from that period - demonstrators chanting "Rabin is a traitor/murderer," and then opposition leaders Benjamin Netanyahu, Ariel Sharon, Rehavam Ze'evi and others firing up the crowds.

Karpin's main "scoop" is his contention that there was a direct, formal connection between the right-wing Knesset leadership, called the "Political Directorate" and led by Tzahi Hanegbi, the mainstream settler activists called the "Joint Staff" and led by then-Council of Jewish Settlements in Judea, Samaria and Gaza (Yehsa) leader Uri Ariel, and the "Action Headquarters," a coalition of extremists who explicitly preached hatred, anti-Arab racism and violence.

"Hanegbi was the Likud's operations officer in the struggle against Rabin. He made the decisions between the Knesset opposition and the Action Headquarters, which was controlled by Kahanists and extremists," the narrator tells.

Hanegbi and Ariel declined to be interviewed for the documentary, Karpin says. (Requests from *The Jerusalem Post* to interview Ariel for this article went unanswered; Hanegbi's spokesman said he would not respond until he saw the film.) Meanwhile, Hanegbi is threatening to sue Karpin for libel if the film includes accusations against him.

"Netanyahu sat on the Political Directorate, the film contends. In an interview after a screening of the film for journalists this week at Jerusalem's Cinematheque, Karpin said he did not approach Netanyahu for an on-camera interview because we brought no allegations against him, only facts, and these were shown in TV footage. Therefore we didn't think we

needed his reaction."

Asked by the *Post* about the film's contention that the Political Directorate, with Netanyahu's participation, directed the activities of the Action Headquarters, Netanyahu's spokesman, Sbai Bazak, said: "Demonstrations in a democratic country are legitimate, but they must not cross the line between legitimate protest and violence or incitement to violence. The prime minister made this clear once and again in the months before the assassination. At many events he called on the public to avoid expressions or actions that could encourage

incitement, he does bear moral and public responsibility, as do some of his ministers, such as [Tzahi] Hanegbi, [Ariel] Sharon and [Yehoshua] Matza."

In the film, Sharon is quoted from an interview he gave to the *Israeli newspaper Hashavim*, in which he reportedly said: "The Rabin government is worse than the Jewish state."

Matza is shown saying that the Rabin government owed its majority to Arab Knesset members "who come from the PLO race, who come from the non-Jewish race." (Sharon was not interviewed in the film, and his spokesman, Ra'anan Gissin, told the *Post* that Sharon did not want to discuss the issue. "The whole subject is painful for him. Rabin was a close friend of his," Gissin explained.)

UNLIKE MOSEVICS, Karpin maintained that he had no message, no goal, not even a point to make in the documentary. "The facts I presented speak for themselves," he said. "I'm a journalist, and my only goal was to make a good documentary."

But clearly the film has a message - the one Mosevics articulated. It draws a connection not only between the protests and the assassination, but between the incitement and Netanyahu's election campaign.

"Who the Action Headquarters ended its incitement campaign, it put all of its efforts into Netanyahu's election campaign," the narrator says.

The documentary shows Action Headquarters members putting up Netanyahu election posters. Moshe Beu-Zimra, a former Action Headquarters member and brother of Gadi Ben-Zimra, one of the group's leaders, told the *Post* that Karpin's contention that the organization was led by Kahanists and extremists "is going to get him sued for libel." (Karpin said he is not worried about lawsuits. A lawyer checked the film, and he added, "I have my investigative material.")

He was aided by a few other researchers, and Channel 1 investigative reporter Amnool Abramovitch is listed as the documentary's consultant. Moshe Beu-Zimra said he was

not aware of Action Headquarters members working for Netanyahu's election campaign, but added: "If they did, what's wrong with it?" He deplored the assassination as "a terrible stain on the history of the Jewish people, but nobody is responsible for it except Yigal Amir, and there are question marks about that."

Karpin names names, and uses charts to show the membership of the Political Directorate, Joint Staff and Action Headquarters. Among those interviewed are Likud MK Michael Eitan and National Religious Party MK Hanan Porat, who the film contends were members of the Directorate. Each expresses regret and accepts a share of the responsibility for the mainstream opposition's failure to oust violent extremists from its ranks.

A problem with the film is that it draws no distinction between politicians like Eitan and Porat

and those such as Hanegbi and Ze'evi, who have never expressed any regret for their roles in the protest movement. Karpin's attempt to let "the facts speak for themselves" ends up depicting the incitement campaign against Rabin as monolithic - all black, no grays.

Karpin's visit to the home of Amir's parents and his telephone conversation with Amir, yield interesting new information. Geula Amir, Yigal Amir's mother, says "Gali [Yigal] was just the messenger" of God's will. She uses *gematria* to argue that a

passage in the Book of Job foretells the advent of "Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the left - Labor, Meretz, Rabin." She says the passage shows that Rabin "will die, like this is his destiny." Speaking from his jail cell to

the documentary is scheduled for screening at the Jerusalem and Tel Aviv Cinematheques in June.

A 15-minute segment depicting the role of American Jewish extremists in the incitement will not be shown here, but Karpin says he hopes to release the longer version of the film in the US.



Was the incitement against Rabin planned from above? Karpin draws connections between political leaders and extremist rabble rousers. In picture: 'A government with blood on its hands.'

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JORDAN

Continued from Page 7

The conclusion of the peace treaty was accompanied by such magnificent visions of huge projects changing the map of the region, for example, the Dead Sea-Red Sea Canal or an extensive railway system, that people find it very difficult to accept that two-and-a-half years later none of these projects is visible.

Why have things turned out this way?

The slow movement on economic projects is the result of a number of factors. The financial input of the international community has been much lower than was hoped for in Jordan. But it must also be admitted that the bureaucracy on both sides has often dragged its feet and local, narrow interests have taken precedence over the vision.

There are other factors, as well. The reputation on the Jordanian side of Israeli business and economic initiative has not always been warm. The boycott by professional Jordanian syndicates creates great difficulties for Israelis interested in doing business in Jordan. Jordanian lawyers who work for Israeli-Jordanian firms are expelled from their professional association. For the same reason, it is difficult to recruit Jordanian engineers.

Many people in the Jordanian business community oppose cooperation with their Israeli counterparts as a matter of principle. The loud demonstrations against the Israeli industry exhibition, which was initiated by a Jordanian firm, deters business people on both sides.

On the Israeli side, there is also a structural problem. To develop economic relations, there is a very strong need for a coordinating authority. At the beginning of rela-

tions, there existed a body called the monitoring committee, which, on the Israeli side, had a direct channel to the prime minister. It coordinated very effectively the work of the various ministries vis-a-vis Jordan, but its mandate expired when the 15 planned bilateral agreements were completed.

The disbanding of the committee left behind it a wide gap which has not been filled. As a result, different ministries often maintain contradictory policies on important issues regarding economic projects with Jordan. The Israeli system of government is highly decentralized, and without a strong coordinating authority it is very difficult to advance cooperation.

There is now a possibility that Finance Minister Dan Meridor will undertake this role, but this appointment is being hindered by internal politics. If we don't improve coordination, economic cooperation and development will simply not take off.

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6:00 p.m. Roundtable Discussion: Chairman: Dr. Hanan Naveh, Tel Aviv University and Kof Israel
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Where the stolen gold trail leads

The plundering of gold from Nazi victims was no 'rogue operation,' but was 'essential to the financing of the German war machine,' Marilyn Henry reports

The United States, in an extraordinary report, has documented one of the greatest thefts by a government: the confiscations by Nazi Germany.

In the last seven months, 11 federal agencies have been scouring the US National Archives to research and write the history of the American efforts to identify, track and recover Nazi loot. This is a "vital but relatively neglected dimension of history" of World War II, said the lead American restitution official, Undersecretary of Commerce Stuart Eizenstat, who issued the report in Washington on Wednesday.

Much of the information about the refugees already was known — certainly in the Jewish community and among Jewish historians. Much of the material on Swiss-Nazi financial ties has been widely publicized over the last year.

However, the 207-page Eizenstat report collects and synthesizes the information, and the official American government imprimatur guarantees a wide audience.

"Many profited handsomely from their economic cooperation with Nazi Germany, while the Allied nations were sacrificing blood and treasure to fight one of the most powerful forces of evil in the annals of history," the report said.

As the principal bankers and financial brokers for the Nazis, the Swiss figure prominently in the report. But Eizenstat stressed that his was a historians' report, not a political document. "It is a search for facts from the past. It seeks neither to defend or offend any nation," he said.

Although he cautioned that his report is "preliminary" and "incomplete," Eizenstat drew five major conclusions about Nazi looting, neutrality, Swiss-German relations, the role of the Americans and the trading of Holocaust victims' gold. The US report, for example, paints the Americans as well-intentioned and as greater champions of refugees than the other Allies, but as failing to exert enough leadership.

"Neither the US nor the Allies pressed the neutral countries hard enough to fulfill their moral obligation to help Holocaust survivors by redistributing heirless assets for their benefit." What the neutrals and the Allies drew from them remains to be seen.

NAZI LOOT

The massive and systematic plundering of gold and other assets

from conquered nations and Nazi victims was no "rogue operation," but was "essential to the financing of the German war machine," the report said.

Much of this involved the Reichsbank, which incorporated looted assets into Germany's gold reserves. Between January 1939 and June 1945, Germany transferred gold worth \$400 million (\$3.9 billion in current values) to the Swiss National Bank in Bern. Of this, the SNB bought three-quarters, while the remainder went into the accounts of other countries as payment for goods or raw materials.

"Some" gold confiscated from individuals, including victims of Nazi atrocities, also was incorporated into Reichsbank gold stocks: The German Central Bank organized the sale or pawning of concentration-camp loot, and arranged for some of this gold to be resmelted, which would disguise its origins. The Reichsbank also assisted in converting victims' gold coins, jewelry and dental fillings into assets for deposit in a shady account under the name "Melmer."

MORALITY TALE

For centuries, neutrality was a legitimate way for smaller nations to preserve their political sovereignty and economic viability. But World War II was a unique situation because Nazi Germany posed a mortal threat to Western civilization. However, "it is painfully clear that Argentina, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and other neutral countries were slow to recognize that this was not just another war."

The Eizenstat report charged that in this instance, "neutrality collided with morality. Too often, being neutral provided a pretext for avoiding moral considerations." While self-defense and fear might be rationales for neutrality, profit was also a rationale in all neutral countries, while there was outright Nazi sympathy in some.

The report cautioned against "making simplistic moral judgments about the conduct of neutral nations in wartime," saying that the neutral states were not responsible for the world or the Holocaust.

Further, no country did as much as it might have or should have to save the Jews, Gypsies, and other innocent victims of Nazi persecution. The report noted, for example, that restrictive American immigration policies kept hundreds of thousands of refugees



Undersecretary of Commerce Stuart Eizenstat issues his report in Washington. 'Neutrality collided with morality.'

from finding a haven in the US.

Whatever the motivation, the effect was that the neutrals' acceptance of stolen gold helped sustain the Nazi regime and prolonged its war effort.

This continued long past the time when these countries had any legitimate reason to fear German invasion.

Department had concluded that, on balance, Switzerland's neutrality was more positive than negative for the Allies, this "relatively benign" judgment was not shared by the War, Justice or Treasury departments. These agencies said that Switzerland, in addition to providing banking and investment services, engaged in direct production for the Nazis; provided

argued that they bought the gold in good faith, that it was part of war booty obtained under international legal principles by the Third Reich during its victorious campaigns, and that there was no international legal principle that entitled the Allies to recover and redistribute Nazi assets.

In 1946, the Allies and Switzerland signed the

"It is painfully clear that Argentina, Portugal, Spain Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and other neutral countries were slow to recognize that this was not just another war"

SWITZERLAND

As with the US and Canada, Switzerland had tight immigration policies that closed the doors to tens of thousands of Jews. The local Jewish community was forced to support those refugees who were admitted. It was Switzerland that inspired the "J" stamp on passports that was used to identify Jews and block them from entering the country.

Of all the neutrals, Switzerland had the most crucial economic relationship with Germany and the most complex role in World War II. It managed gold accounts for the Nazis as well as for the Allies. It was a significant intelligence post for the US, and was a "protecting power" for the Allies when it came to POWs.

Although in 1944 the State

Germany with arms, ammunition, machinery and agricultural products, and allowed "unprecedented" use of its railways for Germany and Italy.

Further, the Eizenstat report said, the Swiss bankers were aware that they were handling looted gold because the German gold reserves had been depleted — to be revived with the gold stolen from the central banks of Europe.

The Swiss then were "obdurate" negotiators after the war and maintained a "business as usual" attitude when the Allies tried to recover looted gold.

The Swiss used "legalistic positions to defend their every interest, regardless of the moral issues also at stake." Initially, the Swiss denied receiving any looted gold and opposed returning any to those who claimed it was stolen. They

"Washington Agreement," which obligated Switzerland to transfer 250 million Swiss francs (\$38.1 million) in gold to the Allies. That was to be part of the "gold pool" that would be used by the Tripartite Gold Commission to make restitution to the central banks of Europe that had been looted by the Nazis.

The \$58 million, however, was far less than the \$185 million to \$289 million in looted gold that the US estimated was at the Swiss National Bank for its own account at war's end. An additional \$120 million of German-looted gold was also estimated to be on account for other countries at that time.

Under the accord, the Swiss also agreed to liquidate German assets, half of which were to be transferred to the Allies to be used for the reconstruction of Europe and to aid stateless Nazi victims. This was never fully implemented; it was sidetracked by a number of Swiss arguments, including the exchange rate, the settlement of German debts to Switzerland, and whether German assets were truly German, or were Swiss-owned. And while the US and the Swiss wrangled over the liquidation, the

Swiss made only a "token" payment of 20 million francs toward the resettlement of refugees.

The pact was finally settled in 1952, when Switzerland paid \$28 million. This was far less than 50 percent of the value of German assets in Switzerland, which were estimated by the Swiss to be around \$250 million, while the Allies estimated the value between \$250 million and \$500 million.

"Clearly, Switzerland's delay was intended to keep German assets under its control as a guarantee for settlement of Swiss claims against the Nazi regime." Accompanying that 1946 accord were "side letters" in which the Swiss made a commitment to identify dormant, heirless accounts that could be used for the benefit of Nazi victims. However, the Swiss did not actively try to identify those accounts for two decades, and did not transfer the heirless assets (located at that time) to refugee organizations — including the Jewish Agency and the Joint Distribution Committee — until the 1970s. In another effort in 1996, the Swiss Bankers Association said it had identified \$32 million in heirless Holocaust-era assets. (It was the brouhaha over the dormant bank accounts that escalated into the expanded, international scrutiny of Swiss-Nazi dealings.)

Of the other neutrals, Sweden was the most cooperative in liquidating the German assets it had. Negotiations with Spain and Portugal were protracted and yielded little. Turkey and Argentina paid nothing in gold or assets.

THE AMERICANS

"It is fair to conclude that on the Nazi gold ... issues addressed by this report, the role of the US was also positive," the report stated. The US took the lead in economic warfare against the Reich, and tracked the flow of Nazi assets to prevent any Nazi resurgence after the war. It led the effort to get compensation for states and individuals victimized by the Nazis. The US also "led the magnanimous effort to rebuild post-war Europe through the landmark Marshall Plan." Although it had bars on immigration, it was "the most active in addressing the plight of the refugees, initiating the proposal in the Paris Reparation Conference to assure some share of reparations went to the victims of Nazism," the report said. The US also provided substantial funds for displaced persons and for the resettlement and rehabilitation of refugees.

Nonetheless, there were "serious shortcomings" in US and Allied policy. In the US, there was a demonstrable lack of senior-level support for a tough US negotiating position with the neutrals, and a greater lack of attention to ensuring implementation of negotiated agreements. The US unblocked Swiss assets in the US soon after the 1946 Accord, losing most leverage before Switzerland had met its obligations. Neither the US nor the Allies pressed the neutrals hard enough to fulfill their moral obligation to help Holocaust survivors by redistributing heirless assets for their benefit.

Had the Allied leadership shown greater support and interest, it might have been possible to strike a better bargain on the looted gold and other German assets with the neutral countries, the report said. Also, disputes between the Allies made it easier for the neutrals to drag out negotiations, which delayed the transfer of funds for refugee relief.

The inadequacies of US post-war policy are related to "unrelenting opposition" from the neutral countries and the splits within the Allied ranks. The US was the most

aggressive in seeking compensation for the refugees, but met resistance from Britain, which, according to US officials at the time, feared that providing funds for refugee resettlement would conflict with its restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine.

Further, nations' interests changed with the times. The wartime objectives were replaced by the need to rebuild Europe, the problems of the Cold War and the desire to strengthen West Germany.

The new democratic West Germany had war-era debts to the neutrals, and the Allies were concerned about the broader European recovery efforts. The Allies knew that German efforts to meet their obligation to the neutral countries would strain their economy. In the case of Portugal, the American interest in getting access to the Azores air base led negotiators to settle for a token payment. Security interests became paramount with Turkey, a key NATO ally. Switzerland, though neutral, was seen officially in a 1951 decision by president Harry Truman as a democratic deterrent to Soviet expansionism.

THE VICTIMS' GOLD

There was "co-mingling of gold," and the victims' gold may have been sent to the neutrals or to the Tripartite Gold Commission's "gold pool," which was destined as restitution to the raided European central banks. The Reichsbank or its agents smelted gold taken from concentration-camp internees, persecutees and other civilians, and turned it into ingots.

There is "clear evidence" that these ingots were incorporated into Germany's official gold reserves, along with the gold confiscated from central banks. This is significant because the victims' gold — the so-called non-monetary gold — was to be used to benefit survivors and refugees, not to be distributed to the European banks.

The report refers to the steps taken by the US and the Allies to make assets available for assistance to stateless victims of Nazi atrocities as "initially valiant, but ultimately inadequate." There is no evidence that Switzerland or other neutral countries knowingly accepted victims' gold, but there is "clear evidence" that at least a small portion of the gold that entered Switzerland and Italy included gold from civilians in occupied countries and from Nazi victims.

Eighteen states had decided at the 1946 Paris Reparations Conference to leave assistance and reparations for individual victims to national governments and international relief agencies. "In hindsight, [this] had unfortunate consequences": inequities developed in the treatment of victims depending upon where they lived after the war. Survivors who emigrated to the West or to Israel received pensions from the German government, but the "double victims," those trapped behind the Iron Curtain after the war, have essentially received nothing.

Also, the report said, most governments did not have a long-term commitment to refugee rehabilitation, to search for heirs of abandoned assets, or to distribute heirless assets for appropriate causes. The burden of providing ongoing relief for surviving victims was left largely to private organizations.

The US report suggested that a "significant" portion of the Tripartite Commission's residual gold should be given to the survivors, especially the "double victims" in Europe who survived Nazism and communism. "For the victims, justice remains elusive," the report said. "Their grievances must be seen as the appropriate responsibility of the entire international community on behalf of humanity."

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THE WEEK THAT WAS

A switch of political hats



Netanyahu posed in an F-15 plane... (Israel Sun)



...while Weizman piloted talks with Arafat. (David Rubinger)

By MICHAL YUDELMAN

What is this crisis about? A puzzled and weary King Hussein asked Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu this week after a joint Israel-Jordan ceremony at Naharayim was canceled.

"I have no idea," said Bibi. "Maybe you know?" On the day the "crisis" erupted, Netanyahu was in the middle of photo-op of the week - kitted out as a fighter pilot at some air base and making optimistic statements about progress in relations between Israel and the Arabs in the coming year.

While Netanyahu posed in and out of an F-15 plane, oblivious to

any crisis or the backwards progress in relations with Jordan, the former real pilot, President Ezer Weizman, was pretending to be prime minister and meeting Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to play at reviving the peace process.

Arafat reportedly refuses to meet Netanyahu, whom he does not trust, but has no hesitation meeting Weizman, whom he respects.

Meanwhile, Labor's Yossi Beilin (who recently met Arafat) was getting red-carpet treatment in Amman from Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan. The prince and other Jordanian officials had canceled the meeting with Netanyahu in Naharayim that same day.

Inevitably, someone - in this case

Meretz leader Yossi Sarid - was bound to suggest that Netanyahu and Weizman trade places. Weizman could then save the peace process and Netanyahu could do the frothy and ceremonial stuff - like skiing, or being flown in F-15s.

UGLY ISRAEL

Ma'ariv gave a huge headline, "The ugly Israeli," to a large photograph of a haredi family holding its Pessah mangal (that's holiday barbecue to you newcomers) on top of the Ammunition Hill memorial to the 183 warriors who fell in the battle for Jerusalem in the Six Day War.

Shocked visitors to the memorial were given a sneering response when they asked the family to move to another mangal site.

One griller said it was more convenient to fan the flames for the coals on the memorial sculpture. "If we take the mangal off we'll have to bend down, and then our backs will hurt," he whined.

Try to imagine the outrage if someone tried to grill some hot dogs at the Vietnam memorial in Washington.

While this family was pointedly demonstrating its "respect" for Israel's fallen heroes, nothing less than a crowd was showing their regard for the memory of Holocaust victims with a rowdy and illegal demonstration in Bnei Brak.



Yehimovitz tried to get a word in edgewise... (IDF Spokesman)



...while Hanegbi gave her a tongue-lashing. (Brian Hendler)

It was ostensibly to support Shas leader Aryeh Deri - on the eve of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day.

"Pity they didn't wipe out all the Ashkenazim in the Holocaust," they shouted, yelling "Nazis" at the Israeli police.

To journalists they "explained" they were merely protesting against the attorney-general's decision to indict Deri, the only Sephardi among the four who were investigated in the Bar-On affair, while "the others" were let off the hook.

Dan Police Commander Eli Arazi said the demonstration was organized by Shas leaders, who posted notices all over town calling on

everyone to attend.

The notices asserted the demonstration was legal, but it wasn't, Arazi said.

Shas leaders later denied having anything to do with the demonstration. They said it was organized by "riffraff." Shas MK Shlomo Benizri said "the organizer was an 18-year-old from Bnei Brak whom I don't know personally and whose name I have forgotten."

MEDIA PORTION

The weekly portion of media scandal was provided by Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi and talk show host Shelly Yehimovitz on Israel Radio's *Hakol Diburim* ("It's All Talk").

In a sharp verbal clash, Hanegbi told Yehimovitz she should suspend herself and accused her of trying to topple the government.

Yehimovitz tried vainly to insert questions into Hanegbi's lengthening statements. The minister, bent on lecturing the airwaves undisturbed, became more and more irritated.

Israel Radio staff noted that Hanegbi was trying to follow the lead of Netanyahu, who prefers to broadcast directly "to the nation" without the tiresome intervention of pesky journalists' questions.

Yehimovitz asked Hanegbi if he should not suspend himself, in view of the impropriety of his sitting on what she termed the committee to appoint judges. The committee is next week due to discuss appeals to the High Court to indict Hanegbi for the Bar-On Affair.

"I'll suspend myself when you suspend yourself," he snapped. "You've proved yourself to be an interested party in recent months by your personal intervention in the [Bar-On] Affair. I expect you to suspend yourself and stop acting like you own the only microphone in the state."

Yehimovitz: "The police haven't investigated any affairs connected with me, neither has any damning report been published by the State Attorney about my conduct."

Hanegbi: "You should have suspended yourself a long time ago because you don't function like someone objective, but use public broadcasting to strike at this government and topple it."

MK Shaul Yahalom, chairman of the Knesset's Constitution Committee, was on the same line throughout, but every time he began answering a question from Yehimovitz, he was shouted down by Hanegbi.

GRAPEVINE

To his health

By GREER FAY CASHMAN

Feeling unwell during a vacation in London, US Ambassador Martin Indyk consulted a doctor who immediately ordered him to spend a week in bed. Indyk preferred a familiar bed and returned to Israel on Sunday. On Monday, he was unable to greet some 70 guests who came to his home in Herzliya Pituah for a chamber-music recital dedicated to the martyrs of the Holocaust. His wife, aided by senior embassy staffers, did the honors. Among those attending were sculptress Ilana Goor, retired Supreme Court judge Gavriel Bach and socialites Naomi Cherpak and Daniella Oren. Hopefully Indyk will be back on his feet by Independence Day in order to attend the traditional Beit Hanassi reception hosted by President Ezer Weizman.

makers included artist and well-known equestrian Sally Ariel, former diplomat and currently head of the umbrella body of voluntary organizations Esther Hertzit, and Elise Einhorn, a board member of the International Women's Club.

MEMBERS OF the Vester family, whose forebears were among the founders of Jerusalem's American Colony Hotel, came en masse for the celebrations marking the union between the hotel



Alexander Bovin is making farewell rounds. (I.P.P.A.)

ONE SHOULD always look one's best regardless of the circumstances. That seems to be the motto of Bella Weinstock, former head of the police internal investigations division, who wore a smart black bowler hat when she was released this week from London's Holloway Prison after relatives and friends put up £100,000 to bail her out. Weinstock was detained for 12 days on the grounds that she and a fellow Israeli allegedly concocted a scam to cheat British banks out of millions.

OUTGOING RUSSIAN ambassador Alexander Bovin is making his farewell rounds before winding up his five-and-a-half-year term of office. Bovin, who came here in December 1991 as the last appointed ambassador of the Soviet Union, then found himself becoming Russian ambassador a week after presenting his credentials. This week, he called on Foreign Minister David Levy who said that he hoped that Bovin would come back to visit. Bovin replied that he had good reason to do so. He's leaving behind 40 kilograms of weight that he shed here.

and Relais & Chateaux, a global association of prestige residences, abbeys, mills and manor houses which have been converted to hotels. Fourth-generation member of the American Colony Board Nicholas Vester, who traveled from London with his 18-month-old daughter, Cleo, was puzzled as to why the hotel had the image of being "the PLO hotel," when it so frequently had Palestinians rubbing shoulders with Israelis at its parties. He admitted, however, that shoulder-rubbing between the two population groups was sometimes subject to friction, which was why Palestinians had been excluded from the guest list for Wednesday night's party for travel agents to which Jerusalem mayor Ehud Olmert had also been invited.

THE CAST of *The Dybbuk* got together last week at Tel Aviv's old port to celebrate the completion of shooting. Directed by Yossi Somer, the film, a Swiss-Israeli-German co-production which took seven weeks to make, will be released in tandem with the 50th birthday celebrations of the state. Orna Porat, Moshe Ivgy, Yehzekel Lazarov and Ayelet Zurer star.



'Dybbuk' star Orna Porat

DIPLOMATS WHO early in their careers were given careful lessons about handling the flatware and glassware on the table could happily relax at the 25th birthday celebrations of Rahat, the Beduin township in the Negev. Over 50 diplomats and socialites - amongst them Nagwa Bassiouny, wife of the Egyptian ambassador, and sculptress Malka Rosenstein - happily used their fingers rather than knives, forks and spoons to eat their way through five lambs, specially slaughtered for the occasion, 50 kilos of rice and 10 kilos of hummus. Of course there were plenty of Beduin around to eat the leftovers.

MUTUAL ATTRACTION has no age limits. The latest man in the life of 51-year-old Liza Minnelli is a 24-year-old hotel doorman.

SRULIK by DOSH

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 6 Just thinking about going blonde? (4-6)
- 8 Hold back, but take a cautious look (4)
- 9 Sale doing badly, close (9)
- 11 Stops in extremities (4)
- 12 Step-fathers! (3)
- 13 A little dog is put first—the last thing wanted (9)
- 16 The Russian's single means of moving goods (4)
- 17 Grating as coppers being allowed into 3 (7)
- 18 Turso aside, and this causes amusement (7)
- 20 An employer—sure to be (4)
- 21 A soldier without military personnel transport (9)
- 23 A woman in a sort of loose robe (3)
- 24 Possibly set about young beginner making complaint (4)
- 25 Get a salesman on edge and get a telling-off! (9)
- 29 Behind with the letters? (4)
- 30 Order given when the ratings collapsed (10)

DOWN

- 1 Laughing at a depressed fence (4)
- 2 An old ship with an incomplete load (4)
- 3 A sound item of jewellery (4)
- 4 Approves of publicity about a boggy area (7)
- 5 The top man's there, mad as can be (10)
- 7 Making a profound improvement (9)
- 8 The chief executive quietly staying in (9)
- 10 Some juveniles want for clothing (3)
- 13 Passing trains on it may be diverted (10)
- 14 Not in good shape—so tense (9)
- 15 Longs to include article favouring protective wear (9)
- 19 How to cook small seafood (4-3)
- 22 He survived the deluge, being a bit of a pig (3)
- 26 A river goddess (4)
- 27 Each break can hurt (4)
- 28 Reduced fare for politicians (4)

SOLUTIONS

Yesterday's Quick Solution
ACROSS: 5 Frank, 8 Einstein, 9 Spoof, 10 Antenna, 11 Litha, 14 See, 16 Mishap, 17 Levity, 18 Ask, 20 Sorry, 24 Francise, 25 Torah, 28 Apologia, 29 Odeur.
DOWN: 1 Regal, 2 Uteiy, 3 Stunt, 4 Thrude, 5 Reprise, 7 Neophyte, 12 Timorous, 13 Shortage, 14 Spa, 16 Elk, 18 Seraph, 21 Scale, 22 Forge, 23 Percal.

QUICK CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Hypnotic state (6)
- 4 Deed (6)
- 7 Accumulate (9)
- 9 Head (4)
- 10 Way out (4)
- 11 Small fish (5)
- 13 Clatter (6)
- 14 Wanderer (6)
- 15 Examiner (6)
- 17 Unproductive (6)
- 19 Danger (5)
- 20 Scottish dance (4)
- 22 Press (4)
- 23 Essential (9)
- 24 Gun (6)
- 25 Shellfish (6)

DOWN

- 1 Meedle (6)
- 2 Paper money (4)
- 3 Get away (6)
- 4 Seem (6)
- 5 Story (4)
- 6 Heavenly drink (6)
- 7 Political leaders (9)
- 8 Model (9)
- 11 Slumber (6)
- 12 Sum (5)
- 15 Root vegetable (6)
- 16 Disclose (6)
- 17 Flop (6)
- 18 Cold season (5)
- 21 Advanced (4)
- 22 Irritatee (4)

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Tchaikovsky - Serenade op.48
Avni - Two Psalms for oboe and strings
Elgar - Serenade op. 20

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BUSINESS & FINANCE

Friday, May 9, 1997

13

BUSINESS

in brief

Teva income up 68% in first quarter

Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd. reported first-quarter net income rose 68 percent, boosted for a second straight quarter by sales of two newer products: an epilepsy drug and ulcer medication. First quarter net rose to \$31.5 million or 51 cents a share, up from \$18.7m. or 30 cents a share, at the same point last year. Sales grew 22% to \$267.6m. from \$220.1m. Half of the company's sales came from North America and some 71% of all sales from outside Israel. *Bloomberg*

Palestinian bank opens tomorrow

The Palestine International Bank will officially open tomorrow, offering what it describes as "a comprehensive range of first-class, international banking services in the region." The bank is headed by chairman Issam Abdul Salam M. Abu Issa, supported by vice-chairman Yahya Omran Karzama. Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat will attend the opening ceremony in Al Bira, near Ramallah. *David Harris*

MK to ask for debate on local authorities

Knesset Labor faction head Ra'anan Cohen yesterday told the Union of Local Authorities he will attempt to launch a parliamentary debate on the "catastrophic" financial situation of local government. The union is staging a vigil outside the Prime Minister's Office to demonstrate its objection to Treasury plans to prevent pay excesses in the public sector. *David Harris*

Gokal must pay for conspiracy in BCCI fraud

A British court yesterday ordered Abbas Gokal, former head of the biggest single borrower from the failed Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), to pay £2.94 million (\$4.8 million) for conspiring to account falsely and to defraud. The court ruled that if Gokal failed to pay the fine, he would be ordered to serve three years in prison. Gokal faces a maximum prison sentence of 17 years. He is the fifth person to be convicted for his part in the biggest known banking fraud. *Reuters*

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The Israel Electric Corporation and its employees wish the whole House of Israel a happy holiday

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Leumi 20% share offering set for this month

By DAVID HARRIS

The Knesset Finance Committee yesterday approved the sale of up to 20 percent of Bank Leumi's shares, to be floated in Tel Aviv, London, and possibly other European locations, before the end of this month. The recommendation was unanimously supported by MKs and received a warm welcome from workers' representatives. The proportion of shares floated in each of the various markets will be determined by the markets. A joint Treasury-MI Holdings-Leumi team is scheduled to return to Israel today from a road show it held this week in Europe, in an attempt to

ascertain the extent of demand for the shares.

A minimum of 10% must be sold, with the ceiling set at 20%. Receipts are expected to total NIS 750 million to NIS 1.5 billion. Currently the government holds 82% of Leumi shares with the remainder already in the public domain. The price for the sale will be fixed in accordance with the value of shares already floated.

Around institutional investors will be given the first right of refusal to purchase shares, which will be sold in London and on other European bourses. There, the floatation will be managed by Merrill Lynch and Lehman Bros.

Accountant-General Shai Talmon, who will decide the exact amounts to be floated and on which markets, would not discuss the next stage in the bank's privatization.

"I will not discuss this issue now, because the Finance Committee did not relate to it today," said Talmon. "What I will say is that in the official government privatization plan for 1997 there are no expectations for a further sale of Leumi shares."

However, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's economic adviser Moshe Leon said yesterday that he and other relevant government officials are looking at a possible further sale of Leumi shares this

year, probably by finding a buyer for the controlling interest. But he would not rule out the possibility of another floatation.

This is in addition to the expected sale of the controlling stake in Bank Hapoalim. "We are very happy with the planned floatations," said Bank Leumi workers' council head Shlomo Yifrach. "However, we are strongly opposed to the sale of the controlling shares. We do not want the bank to fall into the hands of an individual or group, but rather remain with the public."

Workers will be given the option to purchase 10% of shares floated, at a 25% discount. The bank employs 8,250 people.



Betting on a big profit

Spectators watch the fireworks at the opening of the Crown Casino in Melbourne, Australia, yesterday on the banks of the Yarra River. The casino, the largest in Asia and Australia, is valued by analysts at \$1.56 billion. It has 2,500 slot machines and 350 gambling tables. Revenue projections put the first year's take at \$750 million. *(Reuters)*

A-G okays insurance bosses' removal

By DAVID HARRIS

Attorney-General Elyakim Rubenstein has given the Treasury the go ahead to commence proceedings to remove the senior insurance managers convicted in March of price-fixing and other illegal activities.

Action to remove the cartelists will begin immediately after Independence Day, Treasury spokesman Eli Yosef said last night.

During a meeting with Supervisor of Insurance Doron Shorer, Rubenstein told him he is of the opinion the action can be taken under section 18 of the Supervision of Insurance Companies Law.

Shorer had been waiting for the green light to forcibly remove the managers, in an attempt to clean up the industry.

Shorer also received the backing of State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat, whose annual report, which was published on Wednesday, was highly critical of the managers.

The Treasury's legal department also maintains it is within Shorer's rights to push ahead with the technical change required.

In order to remove the executives, whom, apart from one, have so far failed to stand down, Shorer will have to alter the conditions required for an insurer's license.

Shorer has become all the more determined to fight the cartelists, because in the main they have the backing of their senior company colleagues.

Jerusalem District Court Judge Yanatan Adiel convicted six insurance companies, 11 of their managers and the Association of Insurance Companies of creating an illegal cartel in 1991 and 1992.

The six companies convicted, as part of a plea bargain arrangement, are Migdal, Cial Insurance, Hamagen, Sahar, Zion and Menorah.

Strauss-Elite to sell excess Reshet stake

By AVIVA KRULL

The sale of Strauss's excess shares in Reshet, the Channel 2 television franchisee, will be completed by the end of May or the beginning of June, Reshet CEO Tzadik Bino said yesterday. Reshet is owned by Yediot Media (24%), Poalim Investments (24%), Elite (21%), Tzadik Bino (17%), and Strauss

(14%). According to the Second Channel Law, a single holding in a broadcast company must be limited 30% of a franchisee's shares, and shareholders who are owners of other communications media may hold only up to 24%. With the acquisition of Elite, Strauss holds 35%, and must sell 5% of the voting shares and 3% of the capital shares. According to the agreement

among Reshet's shareholders, the seller can accept an offer from a third party who is not currently a shareholder. The shareholders have the right of first refusal, and also have 60 days in which to make up their minds.

Given the present distribution of shares among the existing partners, the only ones who can purchase the shares are Poalim Investments and Tzadik Bino.

There is speculation in the industry that Reshet general manager Dan Shilon is likely to buy the shares, which would arouse fierce opposition from Yediot media owner Arnon Moses.

Shilon, however, denied flatly he has any intentions of buying the shares at stake. "No one has offered me them, and I'm not interested," he said.

Poalim Investments deputy general manager Roni Harel said in an interview that at this stage there are no contacts over the matter with Strauss. *Globes*

Heineken resumes Tempo bid

By ORNA RAVIV / Globes and Jerusalem Post Staff

Tempo Beer Industries minority shareholder Moshe Podhorzer has agreed to resume negotiations over the sale of his holdings in the Netanya-based beverage producer to Dutch brewer

Heineken, which seeks to take over Tempo.

Podhorzer's consent came at the end of a protracted meeting between Heineken representatives, who arrived in Tel Aviv from Holland, and Tempo majority shareholder Jack Beer.

At the end of the meeting, Heineken's representatives said

they were still interested in Tempo, and that all sides had agreed to work towards the share acquisition.

Heineken further stated its cooperation with Tempo would continue, and even expand, while attempts are being made to find a formula according to which Heineken could enter into an ownership agreement.

Originally, Podhorzer had granted Beer an option to acquire his shares in Tempo, but ultimately refused to renew the option after its initial expiration on May 3.

The option was conditional on Beer's eventual sale of his share in Tempo to Heineken, a move which would have effectively placed the company in the hands of the Dutch.

Industry insiders believe Podhorzer will eventually renew the option, but before that will attempt to improve the original terms of the deal.

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Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) (11.9.96)				
Currency (deposit for)	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS	
U.S. dollar (\$250,000)	4.75	5.00	4.250	
Pound sterling (£100,000)	3.875	4.000	2.125	
German mark (DM 200,000)	1.825	1.825	1.000	
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	0.825	0.750	1.000	
Yen (10 million yen)				

(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit)

Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (8.5.97)					
CURRENCY BASKET	CHECKS AND TRANSFERS		BANKNOTES		Rep.
	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	
Currency basket	3.6521	3.7111	3.62	3.49	3.6540
U.S. dollar	3.3783	3.4328	1.92	2.03	1.9881
German mark	1.9808	1.9825	0.87	0.89	0.8928
Pound sterling	5.5129	5.6019	5.41	5.88	5.3208
French franc	0.5810	0.5854	0.67	0.69	0.6928
Japanese yen (100)	2.6887	2.7382	2.84	2.78	2.7444
Dutch guilder	1.7484	1.7718	1.71	1.80	1.7855
Swiss franc	2.3114	2.3487	2.27	2.39	2.3483
Swedish krona	0.4380	0.4431	0.42	0.45	0.4408
Norwegian krona	0.4742	0.4819	0.45	0.49	0.4788
Denish krona	0.5148	0.5233	0.50	0.54	0.5216
Finland mark	0.6510	0.6616	0.63	0.68	0.6585
Canadian dollar	2.4487	2.4888	2.40	2.53	2.4812
Australian dollar	2.8217	2.8639	2.57	2.71	2.8487
S. African rand	0.7585	0.7708	0.85	0.78	0.7810
Belgian franc (10)	0.9304	0.9658	0.93	0.98	0.9821
Austrian schilling (10)	2.7887	2.8317	2.73	2.85	2.8218
Italian lire (1000)	1.9810	2.0130	1.94	2.05	1.9988
Jordanian dinar	1.7548	1.8417	1.70	1.82	1.8489
Egyptian pound	0.8600	1.0500	0.95	1.08	1.0378
Irish punt	3.8247	3.8884	—	—	3.8830
Spanish peseta (100)	5.0827	5.1749	5.00	5.25	5.1443
	2.8227	2.8822	2.28	2.40	2.3825

*These rates vary according to bank. **Bank of Israel.
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ISRAELI SHARES IN NEW YORK

Table listing Israeli shares in New York with columns for share name, last price, and change. Includes AMEX and NASDAQ sections.

Table listing various Israeli companies and their share prices, including Bio Technology General, R.V.R. Technologies, and others.

Table listing international shares with columns for company name, last price, and change. Includes U.S. Intelligent Info, Israel Land Develop-ADR, and others.

MISHTANIM

Table listing Mishtanim shares with columns for share name, last price, and change.

Table listing international shares with columns for company name, last price, and change.

Table listing international shares with columns for company name, last price, and change.

INTERNATIONAL SHARES

Large table listing international shares with columns for share name, last price, and change. Includes companies like Alcoa, AMP Inc, and others.

Table listing international shares with columns for company name, last price, and change.

Table listing international shares with columns for company name, last price, and change.

TASE ROUNDUP

Large headline: 'Teva boosts indexes' with sub-headlines 'Mishtanim 259.72 ▲ 0.43%' and 'Maof 268.47 ▲ +0.55%'. Includes a quote from Dan Gerstenfeld.

Shares closed slightly higher yesterday, recovering early losses by a rise led by shares in Teva Pharmaceutical Industries, traders said.

The benchmark Mishtanim index of the top 100 shares rose 0.43 percent, or 1.11 points, to 259.72 on an all-share turnover of NIS 118 million against NIS 93 million Wednesday.

NEW YORK MARKET INDEXES

Table listing New York market indexes with columns for index name, last price, and change.

OTHER MARKET INDEXES

Table listing other market indexes with columns for index name, last price, and change.

DOLLAR CROSSRATES (US)

Table listing dollar crossrates with columns for currency, last price, and change.

US COMMODITIES

Table listing US commodities with columns for commodity name, last price, and change.

LONDON COMMODITIES

Table listing London commodities with columns for commodity name, last price, and change.

SPOT MARKET METALS (US)

Table listing spot market metals with columns for metal name, last price, and change.

NEW YORK METAL FUTURES

Table listing New York metal futures with columns for metal name, last price, and change.

LONDON METAL FIXES

Table listing London metal fixes with columns for metal name, last price, and change.

DATA COMMUNICATIONS VIA

Text providing contact information for data communications services.

WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP

London sets record

LONDON (Reuters) - The United Kingdom's FTSE 100 index leapt to its fifth consecutive record close yesterday, inspired by gains on Wall Street, despite a sterling related profit warning from Britain's biggest industrial conglomerate.

The FTSE 100 closed up 42.9 points at an all-time record high of 4,580.4, after being down around 20 points at its worst.

PARIS - The French share market also was closed. On Wednesday the blue-chip CAC-40 index eased to close the bourse session down 16.30 points at 3,551.98 points.

ZURICH - Swiss shares were closed for the holiday. On Wednesday the all-share Swiss Performance Index closed up 16.51 points to 3,167.28.

TOKYO - Tokyo stocks ended nearly flat after the key index tumbled after the 20,000 barrier for most of the session.

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Blue-chip stocks closed higher yesterday as Wall Street traders put a positive spin on plans to lower the capital gains tax rate.

The Dow Jones industrial average was up 50.97 points at 7,136.62, as it recaptured part of Wednesday's 140-point plunge.

In the broader market, advancing issues led declines by a margin of 14-to-10 on higher volume of 537 million shares on the New York Stock Exchange.

WALL STREET REPORT

Capital gains tax-cut plans boost Dow

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Blue-chip stocks closed higher yesterday as Wall Street traders put a positive spin on plans to lower the capital gains tax rate.

SUNBIRDS AND MOONFLOWERS

and other Nature Notes. This is a very nicely produced collection of articles by Dvora Ben Shaul, which appeared over the years in The Jerusalem Post.

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critics of the Government are on trial for... (partially obscured text)

Handwritten text in Arabic script: 'هذا من الأصيل'

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General

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Some of the advertisements appearing in our papers are type set outside The Post. When such an advertisement arrives just before the publication deadline, especially when it is provided in the form of a film, it is difficult for us to correct any spelling mistakes that may appear.

While we make every effort to correct such errors, we must ask our readers' indulgence for those occasions when this is not possible.

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Shahak: No doubt IDF could beat Syria

But chief of staff warns more funds needed

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

On the eve of the Independence Day weekend, Chief of General Staff Lt-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak said that despite the critical State Comptroller's Report, the IDF is in good shape. But he warned that unless the defense budget is drastically increased the IDF will have trouble meeting future threats.

In his first reaction to the report, Shahak said more money is needed to correct the situation in the IDF's emergency warehouses and replenish supplies. However, he said the deficiencies would not prevent Israel from winning any future war.

A confident Shahak told military

reporters that he had no doubt the IDF could defeat the Syrian army if war broke out.

"The IDF is much stronger than the Syrian army and we are growing in strength every year," Shahak said. "We will be victorious in any war against [Syria]. But there are steps we have to take to meet the threats, such as their surface-to-surface missiles and improvements in their artillery."

"The budget, however, is significant regarding the duration of the war and even the number of losses we are willing to take. We need to invest more to reduce these losses and more quickly defeat them [the Syrians]."

Shahak said NIS 1 billion was diverted last year to replenish supplies in light of assessments that there was a greater feasibility that fighting could break out with Syria. "But if there won't be a significant increase in the [IDF] budget we'll have to rethink our planning," Shahak said. "We can't let off lots of people. The running costs can't be lowered for an

extended period. We can't cut security costs in south Lebanon and we can't make any major changes in the level of supplies."

"It's like using blocks to plug a leak. You remove one to plug a hole, but then you open another," Shahak said.

Regarding the poor training of standing units like the Golani Brigade, Shahak dismissed the comptroller's criticism, saying that the level sought is an optimum, but that current training levels are also good. He said that while the IDF does not have a surplus of combat soldiers, the existing units are full. He also said that the number of fighting units should not be reduced.

"Quite the contrary. I'd be happy to see a larger buildup of forces," Shahak said.

Asked whether he would seek to extend his term as chief of staff for a fourth year, or retire next year, Shahak said he had not yet decided. He also said that a reshuffle of the General Staff is not expected in the near future.



Honoring the fallen
Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu prepares to lay a wreath last night at Jerusalem's Yad Lebanim, during a ceremony held in advance of Remembrance Day for the Fallen of Israel's Wars. (Bryan McBurney)

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Remembrance Day marks death of 18,538

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

On Saturday night the nation bows its head to mark the 18,538 who have fallen in battle and terrorism since Israel's founding 49 years ago. This year's ceremonies will be noted by the fresh graves of 73 servicemen who were killed in the helicopter collision last February on their way to Lebanon - the worst single accident in the history of the IDF.

Remembrance Day begins at 10 p.m. tomorrow night with the ceremony at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. President Ezer Weizman and Chief of General Staff Lt-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak are to speak at the ceremony.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai sent a letter to bereaved families: "The list of those who have fallen is long. Each one was a world unto himself and the best among us. We saw this before our very eyes with the terrible helicopter tragedy in which we lost 73 of the best fighters. We also lost soldiers in actions in Lebanon and in the defense of the

state, in the fight against terror and in the continuing actions to strengthen our army.

"As we approach the jubilee of our independence, we look full of hope, for progress in the peace process with our neighbors," Mordechai wrote. "But we also know that all our strength will be needed for many years to come in order to advance toward this peace, or God forbid, to stand against possible threats and defeat them."

On Sunday, the main Remembrance Day ceremony will take place at Mt. Herzl, simultaneously with ceremonies at 40 military cemeteries around the country. The IDF's memorial unit plans to place flowers on every military grave, while Bnei Akiva youth are to place memorial candles on military tombstones and youth from the Noar Ve'haoved Ve'halomed movement are to hand out flowers at the gates of all military cemeteries.

This year, the Defense Ministry said, there are 74,187 disabled veterans.

Hizbullah attacks continue

By DAVID RUDGE

Hizbullah gunmen launched a series of attacks on IDF and South Lebanese Army troops and positions in the security zone yesterday.

There were no casualties among IDF or SLA troops in any of the incidents yesterday, which followed the conclusion of another lengthy meeting of the Grapes of Wrath monitoring group.

The five-nation monitoring committee completed its discussions, which began Wednesday afternoon, at 3 a.m. yesterday regarding complaints by Israel and Lebanon over recent incidents in south Lebanon in which civilians were killed and wounded.

The Israeli complaint related to an incident earlier this week in which Hizbullah gunmen planted and detonated two explosive devices in a shop in a village near Marjayoun township. Four civilians and three SLA soldiers were wounded in the explosions.

The complaint by Lebanon was over roadside bombs which had been disguised as rocks and which had been planted by the side of the road near Nabatiya township, north of the security zone. The devices exploded, killing two civilians and injuring a man and his wife who were in a car nearby.

The IDF Spokesman issued a statement at the conclusion of the monitoring group meeting saying that the committee had determined that the planting of explosive devices in villages was a violation of the understandings reached at the end of the cross-border fighting last April.

The fighting yesterday broke out in the afternoon, when Hizbullah gunmen fired several mortar rounds at IDF troops on operational duties in the zone's eastern sector. At the same time, mortars were fired at a nearby SLA position.

Later, mortars were fired at a SLA outpost in the zone's western sector, prompting return fire from IDF gunners. There were further exchanges in the evening when mortars were fired at another SLA position in the zone's eastern sector.

Fog cause of multiple accidents in North

By RAINE MARCUS, DAVID RUDGE, and Haim

Twenty-eight people were injured - three of them seriously - in a series of accidents, under foggy conditions, on the Haifa-Nazareth road early yesterday morning.

Twenty-one people were injured in one of the incidents, which involved one vehicle, including trucks and vans, near Bir al-Makur village. The pileup occurred around 6:30 a.m., following two other accidents, in which seven other people were injured, on the same stretch of road. The injured were taken in a fleet of ambulances to hospitals in the region.

Adi Ben-Simoo, who was caught in the traffic jam resulting from the chain accident, said there had been heavy fog in the area at the time.

"I saw a lot of people injured and shouting. One of the small trucks ran into the back of the semitrailer and I saw people inside trying to get out," he said. The road is one of the highways on which police have beefed up their presence and are using advanced technology to try to reduce accidents as part of Project 700.

Police stressed, however, that yesterday's accidents were primarily a result of the foggy conditions. In another accident yesterday evening, a 50-year-old man was hit by a train on the northern outskirts of Haifa and was killed at the scene, police reported. In Rehovot, a 33-year-old Rafiah man was hit by a bus and seriously injured while crossing a street between parked cars near the city's Kaplan Hospital. Police are investigating the cause of the accident.

Though 11 people were killed in traffic accidents this past week, police defended Project 700, which began on April 7, saying it is still in its early stages and it is far too soon to determine its effectiveness. The average number of people killed weekly on the roads is 13.

Traffic police say they believe the project, being implemented over 700 kilometers of highways, will deter drivers from committing minor and life-threatening traffic offenses.

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Motevassel reaches Eisenberg semis

By HEATHER CHAIT

Oren Motevassel, the much maligned local tennis player, is the only Israeli to reach today's semi-final rounds of the \$50,000 Eisenberg Jerusalem Open Challenger tournament.

Motevassel, who has never represented Israel in Davis Cup tennis, is now 29 years old, the age when Amos Mansdorf decided to retire. Yet Motevassel is playing the best tennis of his life.

Yesterday Motevassel, the second highest ranked Israeli at 194, beat Mose Navarra of Italy 6-4, 6-4 in the quarter-finals.

"I played consistently well," said seventh seed Motevassel, the only seed left in the tournament. "I kept him deep, played aggressively and made him lose his balance."

Meeting Motevassel today will be Maurice Ruah from Venezuela who survived a fierce battle of just under three hours against sixth seed Goichi Motomura from Japan.

Ruah, ranked 250 against Motomura's 180, preferred to stay at the baseline while he applied mental and physical pressure to

win 7-6(3), 6-7(3), 7-6(7).

"It was very, very tough," said Ruah afterwards. "I had to be mentally very strong and find the shots to beat him." The other semi-final will be contested between Gabriel Trifu from Romania and Wayne Black from Zimbabwe.

Trifu had a smooth passage over Raviv Weidenfeld, winning 6-2, 6-2 while Black put out Mexican Luis Herrera, seeded fifth, 6-7(8), 6-4, 6-1.

Three seeds have reached today's doubles semi-finals.

Top seeds Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhopathi from India will play third seeded Ruah and Italian Laurence Tieleman while Black and Kevin Ulyett from South Africa, second seeds, will play Gianluca Pozzi from Italy and James Sekulov from Australia.

Yesterday Black and Ulyett defeated Motevassel and Yoni Erlich 1-6, 7-6(4), 6-3.

The singles semi-finals will begin at 13:00 at the Israel Tennis Center in Jerusalem, followed by the doubles matches.

Tomorrow's finals begin at 10:30 a.m.

Maccabi Tel Aviv to face Beersheba in State Cup final

By DEREK FATTAL and ORI LEWIS

Maccabi Tel Aviv will meet Hapoel Beersheba in the State Cup final later this month after both teams overcame their respective opponents - Bnei Yehuda and Betar Jerusalem - in yesterday's State Cup semi-final doubleheader at the National Stadium Ramat Gan before a near-capacity crowd of 40,000.

Maccabi the current State Cup holders ended 2-0 winners against the team-of-the-season, Betar Jerusalem, thanks to two contentious penalties awarded by referee Danny Koren and converted in spectacular fashion by Avi Nimni. Both penalties involved Betar defender Jan Talasnikov who was dismissed in the 47th minute for receiving his second yellow card of the game.

Earlier in the afternoon Bnei Ye shuda found themselves 3-0 down shortly after half time against Beersheba, then produced a spirited fightback to bring the scores to 3-2, only to allow the southerners to regain control late in the game again and so end 5-2 winners.

Mac. Tel Aviv 2, Bet. Jerusalem 0

Betar's dream of clinching their first-ever league and cup double were shattered in an ill-tempered match against their old foe. Sadly the game's outcome was determined by the refereeing of Danny Koren rather than by the respective footballing skills of the two sides. In retrospect Jerusalem coach Eli Cohen's decision to rely on Eli Ohana as the sole striker, proved erroneous, as this surrendered rather more initiative than was necessary to his counterpart Abraham Grant.

The Beitaris opened strongly enough cutting through the inside-forward channels twice in the first eight minutes. In the first instance

Ohana had a forceful penalty appeal waved away by Koren following a challenge by Amir Shelah, while Itzik Zohar was met by an equally stone-faced reaction from Koren when he hit the turf inside the area after being crudely sandwiched between the Brumer twins.

The Jerusalem fans might have stomachached those decisions had Koren not then granted a penalty in the 14th minute when Nimni engineered Maccabi's first serious thrust of the game putting Haim Hajaj through towards goal.

The Tel Aviv midfielder angled his way into the Betar box only to be tackled from behind by Talasnikov.

This time Koren pointed to the spot, and Nimni stylishly blasted the ball past Itzik Kornfein to give Maccabi the lead.

The Jerusalemites responded with lively attempts by David Amisalem and then Zohar, but were unable to find the net. The referee's whistle continued to dominate the proceedings as foul after foul was committed turning what should have been a showcase game into a second-rate melee, punctuated by further scoring chances being squandered by Zohar and then Maccabi's Ofer Mizrahi towards the break.

Any suggestion of an equal contest was ended two minutes after the restart when total confusion in the densely packed Betar goalmouth ended with the ball falling to Azhar Kovic who fired towards the net. His shot rifled off a Betar player and struck the arm of Talasnikov, positioned no more than two meters away.

Despite the ball apparently hitting the player rather than Talasnikov playing the ball with

his hand, Koren - who seemed near enough to know better - had no hesitation in awarding another Tel Aviv penalty and flashed his red card before a disbelieving Talasnikov.

The incident caused one way amongst the Betar hordes to suggest that the State Comptroller check Koren's bank account for deposits by a certain Tel Aviv sporting organization.

Despite Talasnikov's heated protest Koren stood firm by his decision, and Nimni fired into goal for a second time with calm assurance.

With just ten men on the field the Jerusalemites never looked like coming back into the match, and Mizrahi and then Nimni should have put the matter beyond doubt for Tel Aviv around the hour mark.

The introduction of Nir Sivilia and then Eitan Mizrahi failed to have the desired effect for Betar, and although hardened by the loyal support of their fans, who stayed to the bitter end, the Jerusalemites could not prevent their opponents from progressing a step nearer their 14th cup success, and another crack at Europe.

Bnei Yehuda 2, Hap. Beersheba 5

It was a case of the right team getting a just result in the early match at the National Stadium.

Beersheba fans had set out from the Negev in the early morning and prepared to take up their places in the stands well before kickoff.

The effort was well worth it, as they saw the league's third-placed team take Bnei Yehuda to the cleaners in the first half.

A terrible mistake by Bnei Yehuda goalkeeper Liran Strauber in the 25th minute led to the first goal. He picked up the ball from a back pass, referee Eyal Tzur had no hesitation

in awarding an indirect free kick from just seven meters to Beersheba.

When the fearsome Gadli Hazut made contact, the ball had "goal" written all over it as he hammer-drilled the ball into the back of the net despite the goalmouth being crowded by orange-colored shirts.

The talented Siad Halilovic added a second goal for the southerners on the stroke of half-time, and the match looked all but over when soon after the restart, Shai Holtzman dived a spectacular header past Strauber.

The introduction of veteran Nissim Cohen - the oldest player in the league at 42 - soon afterwards brought something of a revival to the Hatikva Quarter side.

Amir Avigdor, formerly a Beersheba player, pulled a goal back for Bnei Yehuda on the hour and suddenly the Negev side looked distinctly shaky.

The 3-0 lead, which then became a 3-1 lead, appeared as if it could easily be wiped out as Bnei Yehuda began attacking the Beersheba goal. Alon Mizrahi had a couple of good chances and he finally hit the target when he converted a penalty on 67 minutes.

Somehow, Beersheba managed to hold on for a few more minutes and then regained their composure.

The outcome was put beyond doubt five minutes from the end when Beersheba substitute Sharon Avitan made it 4-2. He sealed the scoreline with another minute into injury time, but by then, the celebrations had already begun in earnest.

Beersheba reached the State Cup final for the second time in their history. They lost the 1984 final to Hapoel Lod 3-2 on penalties after a goalless 120 minutes.

National rugby team take on Yugoslavia

By JOEL GORDIN

The national rugby team leaves for Yugoslavia this morning to play its third match in the preliminary rounds of Rugby World Cup 1999.

The game against will be held tomorrow afternoon in Pancevo, some 30km from the capital, Belgrade. Israel has an unbeaten record in the five-team pool, having defeated Austria 15-3 and drawn 9-9 with Switzerland, both games held last November in Tel Aviv.

Little is known about the Yugoslav team except that they beat Switzerland 8-0, but were thrashed by Ukraine 60-0. The Israeli team will return on Sunday and will immediately start preparing for their next fixture, against powerful Ukraine in Odessa next Saturday.

Only the winning team in the pool advance to the next qualifying

stage leading to the finals which will be held in Wales in 1999.

Israel will be led by veteran Ra'anana fly-half Jonathan Saacks and the vice captain is forward Fabian Rios.

The full touring team is: Forwards - Itzhak Ariel, Mark Goldin, Myron Lipson, Alex Tkachenko, Tomer Bracha, Selwyn Hare, Fabian Rios, Alon Tamir, Avital Eliasov, Zevulun Kaye, David Taitz, Marcelo Hauteman.

Backs - Larry Gordon, Dean Du Plessis, Jonathan Saacks, Evgeny Zaharov, Dion Correia, Michael Katzman, Darren Pincus, Oren Beck, Isaac Tzafadia.

The coaches are Chaim Peer and Jeremy Schauder and the team will be accompanied by president of the Israel Rugby Union Elisha Rubin, executive administrator Cyril Morris and referee and vice president Ray Eisher.

Knicks beat Heat in Miami, Sonics even series in Houston

MIAMI (Reuters) - Homecourt was no advantage for the Miami Heat or the Houston Rockets Wednesday as the New York Knicks and Seattle SuperSonics snatched road victories in NBA second-round playoff action.

Allan Houston and Patrick Ewing combined for 18 points in a 22-3 burst that closed the third quarter and gave the Knicks an 89-79 victory over the Heat in the opener of their Eastern Conference semifinal series.

Houston scored 27 points and Ewing 24 for New York, which remained unbeaten in the playoffs and wrested the homecourt edge away from former coach Pat Riley, who was denied his 1,000th NBA coaching victory by his former team and now bitter rival.

The Knicks held the Heat without a basket for more than seven minutes of the second half. Miami set franchise playoff lows with 19 percent shooting and three baskets in the third quarter.

Tim Hardaway scored 21 points and Alonzo Mourning added 20 for the Heat, who beat out the Knicks for their first Atlantic Division title but lost to them for the fourth time in five meetings this season, including all three in Miami.

The Heat opened a 52-44 lead

with 5:39 left in the third period before Ewing and Houston took over. Ewing made a 10-footer and two free throws and Houston hit a three-pointer before the Knicks took the lead for good at 53-52 on a jumper by Charles Oakley with 3:30 remaining. The quarter ended with New York up 66-55 - a 19-point turnaround.

Ewing dominated his hyped matchup with Mourning, grabbing 16 rebounds. Mourning, who had early foul trouble, had just six rebounds and missed 7-of-13 free throws.

Larry Johnson had 14 points and Oakley added 11 and 12 rebounds for the Knicks, who shot 36 percent (26-of-73) from the field but made 30-of-32 foul shots.

In Houston, Shawn Kemp had 22 points, 15 rebounds and two huge baskets down the stretch as the SuperSonics held off the Rockets 106-101 and evened their Western Conference semifinal series at one game apiece.

Hersey Hawkins scored 21 points and Sam Perkins, a surprise starter who virtually neutralized Houston superstar centre Hakeem Olajuwon, added 18 for the SuperSonics, who opened a 21-point lead, nearly blew it, then recovered to gain the homecourt edge. Game 3 is today in Seattle.



No score
Yankees' catcher Joe Girardi (right) tags out Texas's Lee Stevens at home plate under the eagle eye of umpire Rocky Roe, as Stevens tried to score a single. Wednesday's NL games: Montreal 19, San Francisco 3; Atlanta 3, Florida 2, 10 innings; NY Mets 4, Houston 1; St. Louis 14, Philadelphia 7; Pittsburgh 14, Colorado 3; Los Angeles 4, Cincinnati 2; San Diego 6, Chicago Cubs 3. Wednesday's AL games: Milwaukee 1, Oakland 0; Cleveland 7, Toronto 1; Detroit 12, Kansas City 3; Boston 11, Minnesota 3; Baltimore 3, Anaheim 0; NY Yankees 5, Texas 2.

Flyers up 3-0 over Sabres, Edmonton halves Colorado lead

PHILADELPHIA (Reuters) - Paul Coffey set up three goals in the first period and Eric Lindros and Dale Hawerchuk tallied on the power play 3:33 apart as the Philadelphia Flyers moved within one win of the Eastern Conference finals with a 4-1 victory over the Buffalo Sabres Wednesday.

In the Western Conference semifinals, the Edmonton Oilers halved the visiting Colorado Avalanche's lead to 2-1 in their best-of-seven series by rallying for a 4-3 victory.

The Flyers have a commanding 3-0 lead in the Eastern semis and can wrap it up at home in Game 4 today.

Rod Brind'Amour added a first-period tally and Garth Snow stopped 15 shots for Philadelphia.

Darryl Shannon accounted for Buffalo's offence with a power-play goal in the first period.

The Sabres will try to become just the third team in NHL playoff history to erase a 3-0 deficit and win a best-of-seven series. The 1942 Toronto Maple Leafs and the 1975 New York Islanders are the only teams to accomplish the feat.

In Edmonton, Kelly Buchberger and Ryan Smyth scored just over two minutes apart late in the third period to turn a 3-2 deficit into a 4-3 win over Colorado. Game 4 is today in Edmonton.

Sweden reach world ice hockey final

HELSINKI (Reuters) - Olympic champions Sweden booked their place in the final and kept Canada's gold medal hopes alive with a 1-0 win over the Czech Republic at the ice hockey world championship yesterday.

The Swedish victory ended any Czech hopes of retaining the title they won last year in Vienna and left old rivals Russia and Canada to face off today to decide who will play Sweden in the final.

Sweden owe their success to the spectacular shootout goaltending of Tommy Salo, who turned aside all 40 shots directed at him.

Pat Riley named Coach of Year

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Pat Riley of the Miami Heat yesterday was named 1996-97 NBA Coach of the Year, becoming the first coach in league history to win the award with three different teams.

In his second season as Miami's head coach, Riley guided the Heat to a franchise-best 61-21 record - an improvement of 19 victories over the previous season - and the club's first division title.

The Heat posted winning records for six consecutive months this season, including franchise-best 11-8 records in December and January on the way to finishing first in the Atlantic Division.

Riley won his first Coach of the Year Award with the Los Angeles Lakers in 1990 after not getting the honor despite guiding the team to four NBA championships in the 1980s.

He earned his second Coach of the Year nod with the New York Knicks in 1993.

Riley joins Don Nelson as the only coaches in NBA history to receive the honor three times.

Steinbrenner faces sanctions over Adidas lawsuit

NEW YORK (Reuters) - New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner could be facing his third suspension from Major League Baseball for filing a lawsuit over objections to his team's \$95 million marketing deal with Adidas.

"This time George has really gone too far," an unidentified high-ranking baseball official told the New York Daily News. "He's going to get himself suspended again."

By suing baseball and defying both the major league and agency (marketing) agreements, he's made himself a pariah within baseball."

Taking a page from Jerry Jones of the Dallas Cowboys, who enraged NFL officials and fellow owners by cutting his own multi-million dollar marketing deals against league policy, the Yankees and the Adidas sports apparel company announced a 10-year agreement on March 4.

The deal with Adidas drew immediate protest from other owners on the grounds that it undermined baseball's ability to sign marketing deals on a national basis.

Denny McLain gets eight years in prison

DETROIT (AP) - Denny McLain, the last pitcher in Major League Baseball to win 30 games in a season, was sentenced to eight years in prison and ordered to pay \$2.5 million on Wednesday for stealing from the pension plan of a company he owned.

The 53-year-old former Detroit Tigers star declined to make a statement during his sentencing hearing and showed no reaction when US District Judge Patrick Duggan sentenced him.

Duggan refused a request that McLain be allowed to remain free on bond during appeal.

McLain made no comment as he was led away by marshals.

McLain, who also has served time for racketeering and drug charges, and his business partner were convicted in December of five counts.

They were accused of stealing \$3 million from the pension fund of Peet Packing Co., then using the money for company debts and personal investments.

McLain must pay the \$2.5 million plus interest dating to Feb. 17, 1994, just after he bought the company.

Time right for end to UEFA Cup final format

GELSENKIRCHEN, Germany (Reuters) - Schalke and Internazionale Milan's dismal UEFA Cup final first leg provided perfect evidence that officials are right to bring an end to the competition's two-match format for the final.

Apart from a spectacular goal from Belgian Marc Wilmots which kept alive Schalke's dream of their first European trophy, the game was a dreary tactical, defensive affair which provided little excitement for the neutral observer.

It was a game dominated by fear. Both sides appeared afraid to push forward too much in case they gave away a goal.

From next season the tournament's format for the final is due to be changed and just one match will be played on a neutral venue.

Wednesday's dull encounter match must have reassured Europe's governing body UEFA that it is taking the right decision.

Even Schalke, who face an immense task to keep their lead when they visit Milan's intimidating San Siro stadium for the second leg in two weeks, failed to use their home advantage to the full despite an enthusiastic capacity crowd of more than 56,000.

The fact that Inter were not a full strength because of the suspension of French defender Jocelyn Angloma, England midfielder Paul Ince and Frenchman Youri Djorkaeff, could account for some of their hesitant play.

But the Italians, winners of the Cup twice in the 1990s, have a much stronger squad than their German rivals who have not won a trophy of any sort since 1972.

Inter could have produced a lot more.

One of the most important factors for the home side was that several of their players were carrying yellow cards and were therefore in danger of missing the second leg through suspension.

Those worries would not have been a factor in a one-match final. Gelsenkirchen could have been spared a tedious night.

Rangers celebrate, Celtic mourn, Glasgow recovers

GLASGOW (Reuters) - Glasgow was shaking off several thousand giant-sized headaches yesterday after Rangers wrote themselves into the record books with a ninth successive Scottish League championship triumph.

Half of this divided, football-mad city was still recovering from the celebrations sparked by the title-clinching 1-0 victory over Dundee United on Wednesday night, while the other half was plunged into mourning.

Celtic, who had jealously guarded their own place in history thanks to the nine-in-a-row achievement under Jock Stein

between 1966 and 1974, have now seen their greatest rivals equal that record and wipe out two decades of superiority for the green half of the Old Firm.

Fittingly, it was Brian Laudrup who scored the vital goal which sealed Rangers' success with just one game left. The Danish star has been the outstanding individual for Walker Smith's team in this landmark season.

And while Laudrup's early goal in Dundee launched the party for Rangers' 5,000 travelling fans, it rendered an entire stadium 100 miles away into silence.

Celtic fans turned up for their match at home to Kilmarnock clinging to the hope that their rivals would lose to take the race into the final day tomorrow, but Parkhead was like a morgue once the 43,000 crowd learned of Laudrup's goal. The Celtic-Kilmarnock match fizzled out into a 0-0 draw.

The fierce competition between these two clubs over 109 years has never been greater than it has over the last 10 months as Rangers sought to haul in title number nine and Celtic fought to prevent it.

The battle cost Celtic manager Tommy Burns his job last Friday and even counterpart Smith admitted he felt he too might have been branded a failure if he had not delivered the goods.

"There was a lot of pressure on us this season, in the sense that Celtic had obviously won nine in a row and have been our biggest rivals for a long number of years," Smith reflected.

"When it came to the opportunity to equal one, it would have been looked upon as a failure if it had not been achieved.

There was pressure on me on a personal basis.

"But this season there was a bit more pressure and tension all round - maybe too much. Celtic had a lot to do to try and stop us. In the end it maybe cost Tommy Burns his job because he had not managed it." Few could save Rangers' moment of triumph more than Smith. He had supported the club as a boy but a moderate playing career with Dundee United, where he was also a coach, kept him away from his beloved Ibrox until Graeme Souness recruited him as his right-hand man after becoming Rangers manager in 1986.

SCOREBOARD

ENGLISH SOCCER Premier League results last night: Blackburn 0, Middlesbrough 0; Manchester United 0, Newcastle 0.

Sports Editors: Joseph Hoffman and Ori Lewis

Labor blasts gov't over peace process

By LIAT COLLINS

Eight motions filed by both the opposition and coalition on subjects ranging from security to Shabbat desecration were debated in a special Knesset session yesterday.

Opposition MKs attacked the government and its policies as "failures," while coalition MKs accused the opposition of helping the Arabs and harming Israeli interests.

MK Ephraim Sneh, a candidate for the Labor Party leadership, said in his speech: "[Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu has succeeded in taking us back to those days we had almost forgotten; those days when almost the whole world was against us, the diplomatic siege of the 1970s.

"Even relations with our great friend, the US, are not what they were in the past," said Soeh, adding, "The behavior of Netanyahu, the great isolator, makes us miss [former Likud prime minister Yitzhak] Shamir."

The government had even managed to isolate Israel from North American Jews with the proposed conversion law, he added.

Sneh was heckled by Zvi Hendel (National Religious Party) who called his statements "nutzpa" and by Shas MK Nissim Dahan, who said Sneh would "finish his speech, put a kippa on his head and go ask the rabbis for support in the primary elections."

Another candidate for the Labor Party leadership, Yossi Beilin, claimed that in conversations he had held with Arab leaders he found one of the reasons the peace process has stalled is: "The arrogance and superciliousness of some of those within our establishment who are, among other things, responsible for contacts with leaders in the Arab world."

Part of the reason for the stalemate is lack of experience, said Beilin. "Some of it is foolishness, for which God will forgive them, and some of it is indifference,

which is unforgivable."

Hendel accused the opposition of aiding the Arab side and likened it to a situation in which two people are negotiating over the sale of a car "and suddenly your uncle comes and says: 'What idiot is going to buy your car which has been spluttering for months?'"

Hendel said the government is trying "to straighten the twisted path a bit and you [the opposition] keep interfering... It's unconscionable that [Meretz leader] Yossi Sarid says that [Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser] Arafat can't restrain himself on Har Homa and then to expect Arafat to restrain himself."

Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi attacked Beilin for his meetings with Arab leaders, and accused him of holding the meetings to promote his position within the Labor Party before its primary elections.

"It's bntzpa to do this at a diplomatically sensitive period," said Hanegbi. "All his visits are for his primary election campaign. He is holding an external campaign. He is asking for votes in Arab palaces. I haven't seen him go to Yeroham, but to Abu Mazen, he goes."

Hanegbi rejected claims that the peace process has died and said the government is doing all it can to further it, according to its own principles.

"Our hands are stretched out to peace, but unlike the previous government, we're not closing our eyes," Hanegbi said.

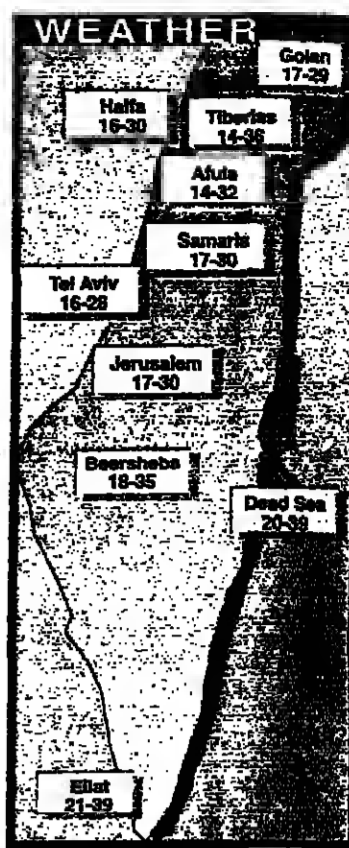
The discussion on the State Comptroller's report, a motion filed by Ruby Rivlin (Likud), was also marked by mutual barbs.

Rivlin and Likud MKs accused the Meretz MKs of "robbing public coffers" by transferring funds from the Education Ministry when it was under their control to bodies affiliated with the party. Rivlin also claimed the left-wing MKs felt themselves to be above the law, and had been aided by former attorney general Michael Ben-Yair.

"The Left had an attorney-gener-

al whom they called 'Mickey' and there were therefore times that indictments weren't filed, and investigations weren't even opened, so that everything they did was considered by them to be purely political while everything the Likud and its partners do they call 'criminal and corrupt.' ... We in the Likud didn't have a Mickey," he said.

Meretz MK Amnon Rubinstein, who assumed the education portfolio from Shulamit Aloni, said that during his term in office the ministry abided strictly by the law and the highest norms of public administration.



Forecast: Further rise in temperatures. Shabbat: Heat wave.

Table with columns for city, low, high, and weather conditions. Includes cities like Amsterdam, Berlin, Buenos Aires, Cairo, Chicago, Copenhagen, Frankfurt, Geneva, Helsinki, Hong Kong, Jakarta, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Moscow, New York, Paris, Rome, Stockholm, Sydney, Tokyo, Vienna, Zurich.

DRIVE CAREFULLY



Snaking up Masada
Some 1,000 immigrant youths from the former Soviet Union climb up the Snake Path at Masada yesterday as part of Independence Day activities. The immigrants, aged 17-21, are on two Jewish Agency programs that bring youth here and enroll them in vocational or academic programs. (Brian Hender)

Religious caucus threatens to bolt over conversion bill

By LIAT COLLINS

The caucus of religious parties in the coalition met yesterday and threatened a coalition crisis if the government does not continue to process the legislation on the conversion bill, which was frozen after first reading some six weeks ago to allow time to find a compromise.

Suissa said: "We are simply asking that the signed agreements with us don't turn into scrap paper. If this happens we will be forced to exert our power, but I hope it won't come to that."

MK Yuri Stern (Yisrael Ba'aliya) said since his party had stuck by the agreement and voted with the government on the conversion bill, despite strong opposition among both its own electorate and abroad, he "expects our coalition colleagues, including the religious parties, to abide by the agreements reached with them, which is not to proceed to second reading until all possibilities of a compromise solution have been exhausted."

Advertisement for 'A Tribute to IDF' book department. Includes details about 'A Prayer for the Soldiers of Israel' (18 3/4" x 26 3/4") and 'A Prayer for the Soldiers of Israel (IDF shield)' (27" x 19 1/2"). Includes ordering information and contact details for Mediant/CLC.

Consulate General of the United States of America, Jerusalem. Notice to the Public: Visa Reception Hours. Effective May 19, 1997, and until further notice, non-immigrant and immigrant visa services for walk-in public will be limited to the following days: NON-IMMIGRANT VISAS: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. IMMIGRANT VISAS: Mondays and Thursdays from 8:30 to 11:00 a.m., or by appointment. Tuesdays - petitions (form I-130) only, 8:30 - 11:00 a.m.

Advertisement for Hazorfim. Features a large image of a silver chalice and text: 'Hazorfim. Timeless Art. Silver'. Includes contact information for Tel-Aviv, Bnei-Brak, Petach-Tikva, Jerusalem, Givat Shaul, and Netanya.

Advertisement for Steinitzky International Bestsellers in Paperback. Lists books by Tom Clancy (Executive Orders), Mary Higgins Clark (Moonlight Becomes You), Sophie's World, and Danielle Steel (Malice). Prices are listed for each book.

Advertisement for Mazada Tours. Features 'SPECIAL OFFER! FULL DAY tour PETRA \$99' and 'LONDON CENTER THE SPECIALISTS TO BRITAIN'. Includes details about Jordan, Egypt, and Israel tours, and contact information for Mazada Tours.